

**Public Opinion Research with Food Businesses on Food Safety  
Regulations: 2022-2023**

Research Report

Prepared for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Supplier name: Pollara Strategic Insights Inc.

Contract number: CW2249206

Contract value: \$194,908.05

Award date: November 30, 2022

Delivery date: March 31, 2023

Catalogue number: A104-150/2023E-PDF

ISBN : 978-0-660-48121-0

For more information on this report, please contact [information@inspection.gc.ca](mailto:information@inspection.gc.ca)

**Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.**

**Canada** 

## **Public Opinion Research with Food Businesses on Food Safety Regulations: 2022-2023**

This public opinion research report presents the results of a telephone survey and focus groups conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights Inc. on behalf of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : **Recherche sur l'opinion publique auprès des entreprises alimentaires à l'appui de la conformité à la réglementation sur la salubrité des aliments : 2022-2023**

This publication may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes only. Prior written permission must be obtained from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. For more information on this report, please contact the CFIA at: [information@inspection.gc.ca](mailto:information@inspection.gc.ca) or at:

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
1400 Merivale Road  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0Y9

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Health, 2023

## Table of Contents

<b>Narrative Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Detailed Findings</b> .....	<b>11</b>
General awareness and impressions of CFIA and CFIA services.....	12
SFCR and other regulations.....	16
Outcome based regulations .....	21
CFIA website and other communications.....	23
Creative testing .....	26
Ask CFIA.....	28
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>33</b>
Appendix A: Quantitative Research Methodology Report .....	33
Appendix B: Qualitative Research Methodology Report .....	41
Appendix C: SFCR Survey Questionnaire .....	43
Appendix D: Qualitative Research Recruitment Screener.....	56
Appendix E: General Focus Group Discussion Guide.....	66
Appendix F: Ask CFIA Focus Group Discussion Guide .....	71
Appendix G: Ask CFIA IDI Discussion Guide.....	74
Appendix H: Ask CFIA Survey Questionnaire .....	77

## Executive Summary

Pollara Strategic Insights (Pollara) is pleased to present this report to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regarding qualitative and quantitative public opinion research undertaken to support food businesses' compliance with food safety regulations.

As part of the CFIA's mandate, the agency regularly interacts with Canadian food businesses. Public opinion research among decision-makers in these organizations is an effective way for the CFIA to stay connected to these businesses. Now is an especially crucial time to conduct this research, as the Canadian food business sector faced extraordinary pressures during COVID-19. The sector is evolving as a result of the pandemic, and dealing with new trends such as the growth of e-commerce.

Moreover, the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) have been coming into force in stages since 2018, so it is important to fully understand how these regulations are being viewed by the sector. Building off this, this research project was an opportunity to explore how the industry feels about other food safety regulations, including federal food regulations around online sales and importing, and labelling requirements (including the labelling tools and resources available to the industry from the CFIA).

This research also looked at the relationship between the CFIA and the businesses they serve, with a close focus on the Ask CFIA tool.

In the focus groups, many businesses spoke of a desire for a “partnership” between themselves and the CFIA – we hope the findings of this research will help the CFIA strengthen this partnership by better communicating with and responding to the needs of the businesses they serve.

To meet the research objectives, Pollara conducted a telephone survey of 902 Canadians who own or hold a managerial role at a business in the food sector and are responsible for regulatory compliance, and an online survey with 200 past Ask CFIA users.

The phone survey was conducted by our fieldwork subcontractor, Elemental DCI, through their centralized call-centre using their Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. Sample was drawn based on a selected list of NAICS codes provided by CFIA. Interviews were fielded between February 2 and March 16, 2023, in English and French, and took an average time of 15.3 minutes to conduct.

Sample for the online survey was drawn based on a list of previous Ask CFIA users who had provided their e-mail address to CFIA and consent to be contacted. The CFIA sent them invitations to participate in an online survey in either English or French. Pollara collected responses between February 2 and 19, 2023. The median response time for the survey was 7.0 minutes.

The qualitative phase of the research included a series of 6 online focus groups with owners and employees of Canadian food businesses, and 2 in-depth-interviews (IDI) with industry consultants, all of whom were responsible for regulatory compliance. The groups were approximately 90 minutes in length with the IDIs 45 minutes in length. All participants received an honorarium of \$350.

It is important to note that qualitative research is a form of scientific, social, policy and public opinion research. Focus group research is not designed to help a group reach a consensus or to make decisions,

but rather to elicit the full range of ideas, attitudes, experiences and opinions of a selected sample of participants on a defined topic. Because of the small numbers involved the participants cannot be expected to be thoroughly representative in a statistical sense of the larger population from which they are drawn and findings cannot reliably be generalized beyond their number.

The key findings of the qualitative and quantitative research are summarized below:

### **General awareness and impressions of the CFIA and CFIA services**

- Four in five (80%) food businesses feel they have a very clear understanding of the food safety regulations that apply to their business, and a similar percentage (82%) are very confident they could pass a CFIA inspection. Both these figures are high in all regions, and amongst all types of businesses.
- Perceptions around CFIA transparency have improved over the past year. The percentage of businesses who feel the CFIA is very transparent at reporting non-compliance has risen from 38% to 47%, while the percentage who feel they are very transparent at assessing non-compliance with regulations has risen from 38% to 52%.
- Across the 4 focus groups, larger businesses who dealt with CFIA more tended to have more positive perceptions of them, while small businesses tended to know less about the CFIA and therefore felt less connected to them.
  - While larger businesses were more likely to see the CFIA as a “partner”, virtually every focus group participant wanted the CFIA to play more of a partnership role, and less of an enforcement role.
  - Participants generally felt the CFIA was most helpful to businesses when they are starting up. Many businesses who have been operating for years tend to assume they know all the regulations, and look to the CFIA mainly to let them know about changes to regulations.

### **SFCR and other regulations**

- Two-thirds (66%) have seen, read, or heard of the SFCR, up 4 points from last year, but not as high as in 2021.
  - Consistent with last year, awareness of the SFCR is highest in Quebec (87%), and among larger organizations with higher revenues. Awareness of SFCR is higher among processors/manufacturers (78%) and wholesalers/distributors (76%), than among retailers (60%) and agriculture businesses (57%).

### **Outcome based regulations**

- Most businesses have a general understanding of “outcome-based regulations”, though only 36% feel the concept is very clear.
- There is overwhelming conceptual support for outcome-based regulations (support 87% / oppose 5%). Among those with a “very clear” understanding of what outcome-based regulations are, support sits at 91%.
- Though there is widespread support for outcome-based regulations across all types of businesses, focus groups showed some underlying concerns held by smaller businesses. Primarily, some of them felt these regulations can create a competitive advantage for larger businesses who have more resources to figure out efficient ways to achieve outcomes within the regulations. They felt these regulations should be accompanied by guidance on how to meet the outcomes.
  - There was additional concern, particularly among Ontario businesses that federal outcome-based regulations wouldn’t be effective unless all federal and provincial/territorial regulatory bodies adopted them.

### **CFIA website and communications**

- The CFIA website is the most common place information is sought from about food safety regulations. In focus groups, most participants report looking for answers on the website first, before using Ask CFIA.
  - Quebec is an exception, as businesses there lean heavily on the provincial government for information. More of them visit the MAPAQ website than the CFIA website.
- On both the survey and in focus groups, businesses were generally positive about the CFIA website. They found the content there detailed and thorough, though difficult to search through at times given the large volume of it.

### **Creative testing**

- CFIA advertising is unlikely to generate clicks unless it references “new” regulations, as most established businesses assume they already have necessary licences.
- The term “small food business” was not a term widely used by most participants, as not everyone in this sector sees themselves as a “food” business. They felt “small business” sounded more natural.
- The Government of Canada wordmark adds legitimacy to any ad.

## Ask CFIA

- In the last year, 17% of businesses contacted the CFIA through various channels for guidance on food regulatory requirements.
  - The most likely to have contacted the CFIA are businesses in Atlantic Canada, large revenue businesses, processors/manufacturers, wholesalers/distributors, and exporters. These are also the types of businesses most likely to have used Ask CFIA.
- After being told about Ask CFIA, 14% of businesses recall using it.
- Three in four businesses are very satisfied (38%) or somewhat satisfied (37%) overall with Ask CFIA, an increase in total satisfaction of 18 points from last year.
- On both the survey and in focus groups, businesses are generally satisfied with the ease of using Ask CFIA to access regulatory information. There is not widespread demand for the CFIA to introduce alternative methods of contacts.
  - However, reviews are mixed on the quality of Ask CFIA responses and negative on time of response. Many businesses complain of responses taking weeks or months, leading to widespread demands for service standards on response times. Many also complain of responses that only “copy and paste” answers from the website, rather than customizing answers to match their unique situation. As such, businesses would appreciate having more back-and-forth with the people answering Ask CFIA questions, to ensure they receive a complete response.

Supplier name: Pollara Strategic Insights Inc.

Contract number: CW2249206

Contract value: \$194,908.05

Award date: November 30, 2022

Delivery date: March 31, 2023

I hereby certify as a representative of Pollara Strategic Insights Inc. that the final deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Signed:

Date: March 31, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Arnold". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dan Arnold, Chief Strategy officer, Pollara



## Introduction

Pollara Strategic Insights Inc. (Pollara) is pleased to present this report to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regarding qualitative and quantitative research undertaken to support food businesses' compliance with food safety regulations.

The main objective of this research project was to gain insights into the views of Canadian food businesses on the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) and food safety regulations more broadly. The research also included a focus on Ask CFIA, outcome-based regulations, and CFIA digital advertising.

This research allows the CFIA to track key indicators on awareness and confidence, as well as barriers to compliance. Feedback collected during the research will also support refinement of current products and services as well as the development and promotion of new communications products, services, guidance, and tools for regulated parties to help them overcome barriers to compliance.

To meet the research objectives, Pollara conducted a telephone survey of 902 Canadians who own or hold a managerial role at a business in the food sector and are responsible for regulatory/food safety compliance. This survey was conducted between February 2 and March 16, 2023 in English and French. The survey took a median time of 15.3 minutes to complete.

Our fieldwork subcontractor was Elemental DCI, who conducted interviews via Computer Aided Telephone (CATI) systems. Elemental DCI relied on sample from Info Canada, pre-screened on the basis of a series of North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes agreed upon by Pollara and CFIA at the outset of the research (see Appendix A for the full list). In order to ensure sufficient sample size among the agriculture, processing/manufacturing and wholesale sectors, a quota was put in place to ensure that no more than 200 respondents were retail-only businesses. Data was also monitored to ensure that multiple locations from the same franchise were not overrepresented in the sample. The final data was weighted by industry type and province, based on the proportion of businesses that fall into each NAICS code and province. The margin of error for this study was +/-3.3%, 19 times out of 20.

To better understand user experiences with Ask CFIA, Pollara conducted an online survey of Ask CFIA users. Invitations to participate were sent by CFIA to past users who had provided their e-mail addresses and consent to be contacted. In total, 200 people completed this online survey between February 2 and 19, 2023. It took respondents a median time of 7.0 minutes to complete the survey.

A wave of qualitative research accompanied this quantitative research, consisting of a series of 4 online focus groups with food business owners or employees in the food sector, 2 online focus groups among past Ask CFIA users, and 2 in depth interviews (IDIs) with industry consultants who had used Ask CFIA, all of whom were responsible for regulatory/food safety compliance. For each of the 4 focus groups, 6 individuals were recruited as participants, with between 4 to 6 attending. In total, 29 people participated in the focus group discussions. Four groups were conducted in English and 2 in French, and all recruited participants were all given the opportunity to participate in a group conducted in the official language of their choice (regardless of where in the country they operate).

Participants were asked for written consent for all sessions to be video recorded and audio recorded. Participants were provided with an incentive of \$350. Appendix B provides greater detail on how the groups were recruited, while Appendices E, F, and G provide the discussion guides used for the focus

groups and IDIs, and Appendix D provides the screener used for recruiting the focus groups. The following table summarizes the groups:

Group	Region	Language	Date	Number of participants
General focus group #1	Atlantic Canada	English	January 24	6
General focus group #2	Ontario	English	January 25	4
General focus group #3	Western and Northern Canada	English	January 26	5
General focus group #4	Quebec	French	January 31	5
Ask CFIA focus group #1	National	English	February 27	6
Ask CFIA IDI #1	Atlantic Canada	English	March 3	1
Ask CFIA IDI #2	Atlantic Canada	English	March 7	1
Ask CFIA focus group #2	Quebec	French	March 9	3

It is important to note that qualitative research is a form of scientific, social, policy and public opinion research. Focus group research is not designed to help a group reach a consensus or to make decisions, but rather to elicit the full range of ideas, attitudes, experiences and opinions of a selected sample of participants on a defined topic. Because of the small numbers involved the participants cannot be expected to be thoroughly representative in a statistical sense of the larger population from which they are drawn and findings cannot reliably be generalized beyond their number.

## Detailed Findings

The following report contains analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative findings of this research project. The report is divided into 6 sections:

- **Section 1:** Provides an overview of general awareness and impressions of CFIA services
- **Section 2:** Looks specifically at the SFCR
- **Section 3:** Examines feelings towards outcome-based regulations
- **Section 4:** Focuses on the CFIA website and other communications from the CFIA
- **Section 5:** Presents findings on Ask CFIA from the telephone survey and the online survey of Ask CFIA users
- **Section 6:** Focuses on feelings towards CFIA’s digital advertisements

Note that the tables presented in this report for the quantitative findings include tracking from previous years (where possible), as well as regional and industry breaks. Of note, we have grouped “Western Canada” together in the tables in this report, but the quantitative data tables provide a more nuanced look at British Columbia, Alberta, and the Prairies (Manitoba and Saskatchewan). The quantitative data tables also show differences by additional attitudinal and “firmographic” characteristics such as business type, business activities, products, and ownership characteristics.

## 1. General awareness and impressions of the CFIA and CFIA services

Four in five (80%) food businesses feel they have a very clear understanding of the food safety regulations that apply to their business. There is a high and relatively consistent level of understanding across the country, ranging from 78% who feel they have a very clear understanding in Western Canada to 83% in Atlantic Canada.

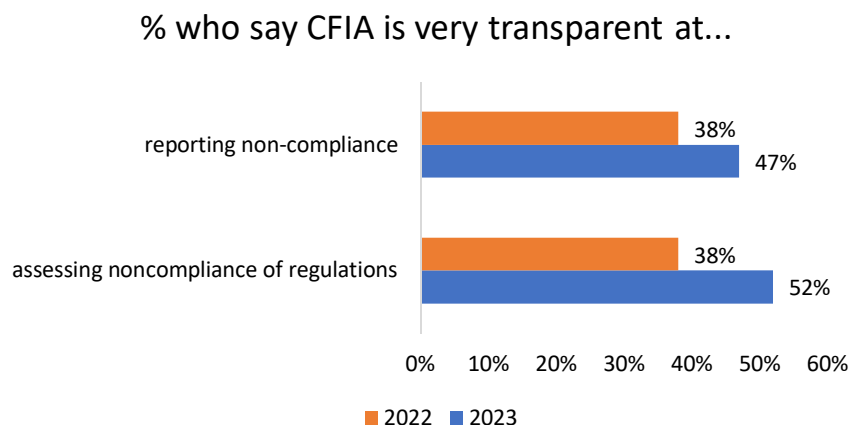
There is also a high and relatively consistent level understanding across different sectors, though retailers (84%) and processors/manufacturers (83%) are more likely to feel they have a very clear understanding of the regulations. Where we do see some variation is by business size, as 96% of businesses with 100 or more employees feeling they have a very clear understanding of the regulations.

Notably businesses who have heard of the SFCR are more likely to feel they have a very clear understanding of the regulations that apply to their business than those who have not (84% vs. 72%).

**TABLE 1 – A1. How well do you feel you understand the food safety regulations that apply to your business?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Very clearly (6-7)</b>	80%	83%	82%	80%	78%	77%	83%	75%	84%
<b>Somewhat clearly (4-5)</b>	16%	17%	15%	16%	18%	14%	15%	22%	14%
<b>Not clearly (1-3)</b>	3%	0%	3%	3%	4%	7%	2%	3%	2%
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103

Perceptions around CFIA transparency have improved over the past year. Perceptions are similar when it comes to different aspects of transparency.



**TABLE 2 – T1-3. In your opinion, how transparent do you think the CFIA is when it comes to each of the following?**

	Evaluating the food safety risk of an establishment	Determining if there are non-compliances of regulations	Reporting and publishing non-compliance results
<b>Very transparent (6-7)</b>	50%	52%	47%
<b>Somewhat transparent (4-5)</b>	25%	22%	19%
<b>Not transparent (1-3)</b>	9%	8%	11%
Sample size	902	902	902

The majority of businesses support the CFIA publishing names of companies who receive AMPs (support 60% / oppose 33%). While most do not hold strong opinions on this subject, among those who feel strongly, 19% strongly support and 10% strongly oppose this.

Support for naming companies is highest for retail businesses (65% support) and lowest among processors/manufacturers (53% support). It is also higher among larger businesses (94% support among those with more than 100 employees, vs 57% among companies with fewer than 100 employees).

**TABLE 3 – T4. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose CFIA publishing names of companies who receive AMPs?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Strongly support</b>	19%	15%	15%	18%	23%	21%	16%	17%	19%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	41%	41%	42%	47%	35%	34%	37%	43%	46%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	23%	22%	26%	19%	24%	22%	27%	23%	22%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	10%	19%	13%	6%	11%	12%	16%	11%	7%
<b>Don't know</b>	7%	3%	4%	11%	7%	11%	3%	7%	7%
<b>Total support</b>	60%	56%	57%	65%	58%	55%	53%	60%	65%
<b>Total oppose</b>	33%	41%	39%	25%	35%	34%	44%	34%	29%
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103

### Qualitative insights

Across the 4 focus groups, there was a wide range of familiarity and interaction with the CFIA. Larger food businesses who dealt with the CFIA more tended to have more positive perceptions of them, while smaller businesses tended to know less about the CFIA and therefore felt less connected to them.

Participants from businesses working with the CFIA regularly were more inclined to see the CFIA as a “partner” rather than as a “regulator”. They tended to look at CFIA inspections as a way to be assured they were compliant with laws, rather than the cops coming to check up on them. Larger businesses who mentioned having CFIA representatives embedded in their operations were nearly all positive about the role the agency plays.

Conversely, some participants who dealt with the CFIA less described them as either “another layer of bureaucracy”, or “like law enforcement” - only showing up when there was a problem. One participant felt “my ideal relationship with the CFIA is if they never show up at all”.

The most common criticisms raised across the groups resulting in businesses having a negative impression of the CFIA were:

- **Lack of support:** The most common criticism among participants that held a negative view of the CFIA was that the organization was just an enforcement body rather than a group willing to support the industry. There was near-unanimous agreement the CFIA can, and should, play a more supportive role by working with companies in the industry to understand and adhere to regulations. A powerful example of this sentiment was displayed when one participant said: “Early on, when I was starting my business, I was calling the CFIA to ask them questions about food regulations. One CFIA representative I talked to said ‘We are not your consultant’, and since then, I have stopped asking the CFIA questions and relying on them to help me comply with regulations.”
- **Personnel changeover:** Many participants were frustrated by what they perceived as high turnover at the CFIA, feeling they lacked one consistent point of contact due to staff changes. According to these participants, this commonly led to breakdowns in communication, a lack of support, and inconsistent guidance on regulations. Some participants reported receiving different answers to the same questions they asked the CFIA when they spoke to different employees, which caused them to lose confidence in CFIA’s ability to support them. A few participants suggested the CFIA institute CFIA liaisons for businesses, particularly for businesses that regularly interact with the agency.
- **Changing regulations without notification:** Some participants felt the CFIA doesn’t do enough to notify them proactively when regulations that apply to their businesses change. Most understood that regulations need to be updated, though there was some disagreement on if regulations were changing too much. Regardless of how participants felt about the rate at which regulations are updated, a majority felt the CFIA was not doing a good enough job at proactively notifying them about these changes. Several participants suggested the CFIA institute email lists for specific areas of regulation that businesses could sign up for – this indicates there is not high awareness of the existing CFIA email lists.
- **Lack of digestible information:** Many felt information the CFIA provides to food businesses is not digestible, easy to understand, or user-friendly. These participants felt the CFIA could do a better job providing educational information to businesses, particularly new businesses, and smaller businesses that may not have as much policy and regulation expertise in-house. One participant wondered: “How do I know my position with the CFIA if they’re not going to educate me?”. There is a desire for the CFIA to provide businesses, particularly new ones, with more educational materials about how regulations apply to their type of business.

There was a strong sense that people need help from the CFIA most when starting a business, while those who have established businesses only wanted to hear from the CFIA about regulation changes that applied to them. Virtually every focus group participant said they would prefer the CFIA play more of a partnership role, and less of an enforcement role.

Atlantic Canadian participants tended to have the most positive perceptions of the CFIA, though this was likely a by-product of their businesses interacting more directly with the CFIA. Quebec participants were

more familiar with their provincial regulatory body: the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ). They tended to view MAPAQ more as “the police”, focused on enforcement, and the CFIA as an informative body.

One participant in the first focus group raised the CFIA “chatbot” as a positive, though they may have been confusing this with another service. When screenshots of the CFIA Virtual Assistant were shown in subsequent groups, awareness and enthusiasm for it was low.

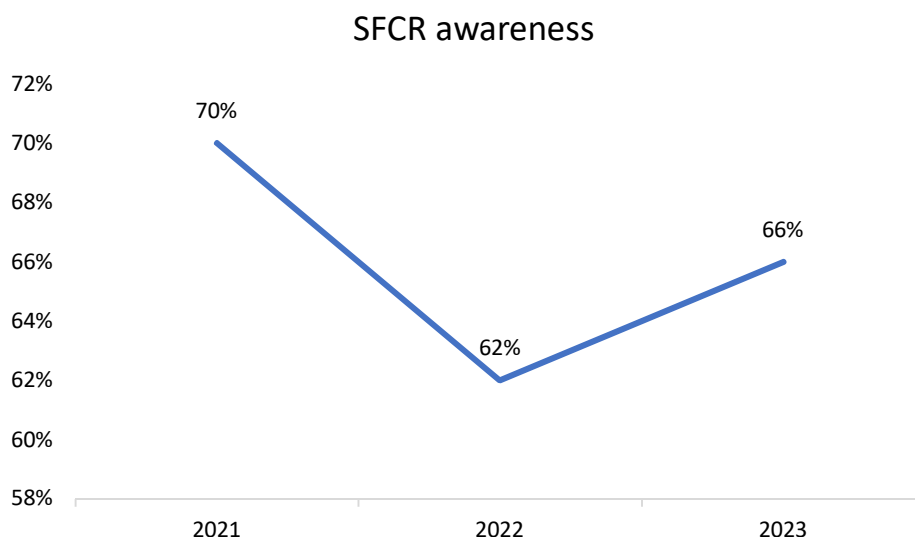
## 2. SFCR and other regulations

Two-thirds (66%) have seen, read, or heard about the SFCR, up 4 points from last year, but not as high as in 2021.

Consistent with last year, awareness of the SFCR is highest in Quebec (87%), and among larger organizations with higher revenues. Awareness of SFCR remains highest among processors/manufacturers (78%, down from 86% last year). It has risen among wholesalers/distributors (76%, up from 65% last year) and retailers (60%, up from 50% last year), while dropping among agriculture businesses (57%, down from 67% last year). Awareness among business who are not retail-only is 75%.

It is notable that awareness of SFCR is consistently lower among retailers, even though they are more likely to feel they have a very clear understanding of how food safety regulations apply to their business.

While 8 in 10 (81%) businesses think SFCR applies to them, this figure dips to 76% among retailers and 71% among retail-only businesses.



**TABLE 3 – A2. Have you seen, read or heard anything about the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Yes</b>	66%	57%	87%	54%	62%	57%	78%	75%	60%
<b>No</b>	30%	42%	12%	40%	33%	40%	18%	21%	35%
<b>Don't know</b>	4%	1%	1%	6%	5%	2%	4%	3%	5%
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103



**TABLE 4 – A4. As far as you know, do you think the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations apply to your business?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Yes</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103

Businesses have heard of the SFCR from a wide range of places. The CFIA is the most common source of where respondents have heard about them, followed by online sources.

**TABLE 5 – A3. Where did you hear, see, or read about the regulations?**

	Total
<b>CFIA NET</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>CFIA – general/other</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>CFIA website</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>CFIA e-mail</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>CFIA employee / inspector</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Online (general)</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Colleagues / Industry events</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Courses / Training</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>At work / In house training</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Media/News/Newspapers</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Provincial Government (e.g. MAPAQ)</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Inspectors (not mentioning CFIA)</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Pamphlets / newsletters (not mentioning CFIA)</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>E-mail</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Government of Canada</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>School</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Through Canada GAP</b>	<b>1%</b>
Sample size	663

There is no consensus on what element of the SFCR creates the biggest challenge for businesses; when presented with options, 17% say “implementing traceability labelling on products”, 15% say “maintaining traceability records”, 12% say “maintaining written preventive controls”, and 9% say “implementing preventive controls”.

“Maintaining traceability records” was the biggest challenge among retailers, “implementing traceability labelling on products” was the biggest challenge among agriculture businesses, and “maintaining written preventive control plan” was the biggest challenge among wholesalers/distributors and processors/manufacturers.

**TABLE 6 – A7. From your perspective which of the following key food safety elements of the SFCR is your biggest challenge? Would it be...?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Implementing traceability labelling on products</b>	17%	17%	15%	18%	17%	21%	14%	14%	22%
<b>Maintaining traceability records</b>	15%	10%	8%	17%	18%	18%	10%	11%	25%
<b>Maintaining written preventive control plan</b>	12%	12%	16%	13%	9%	8%	16%	14%	8%
<b>Implementing preventive controls</b>	9%	7%	16%	6%	9%	5%	11%	9%	10%
<b>Obtaining or maintaining a Safe Food for Canadians Licence</b>	9%	3%	12%	8%	10%	16%	9%	6%	9%
<b>Other</b>	8%	16%	4%	7%	9%	7%	10%	8%	6%
<b>None of these are challenges</b>	30%	35%	29%	33%	28%	24%	30%	38%	20%
Sample size	701	76	160	253	210	62	185	412	42

Three in ten (30%) businesses use a private food safety or quality control certification system, with this more common among larger and higher income businesses. Only 16% of agriculture businesses use this, much less than other sectors.

**TABLE 7 – A8. Do you use a private food safety or quality control certification system such as GFSI, ISO or QMP?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Yes</b>	30%	56%	22%	30%	32%	16%	39%	38%	30%
<b>No</b>	60%	37%	72%	55%	59%	74%	56%	53%	58%
<b>Don't know</b>	10%	7%	5%	15%	9%	10%	5%	9%	12%
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103

The majority of businesses have traceability documents (65%), traceability labelling (61%), a written preventive control plan (54%), and a Safe Food for Canadians licence (53%). Once again, most of these measures are more common among larger and higher income businesses. Agriculture and retail businesses are generally less likely to use these tools.

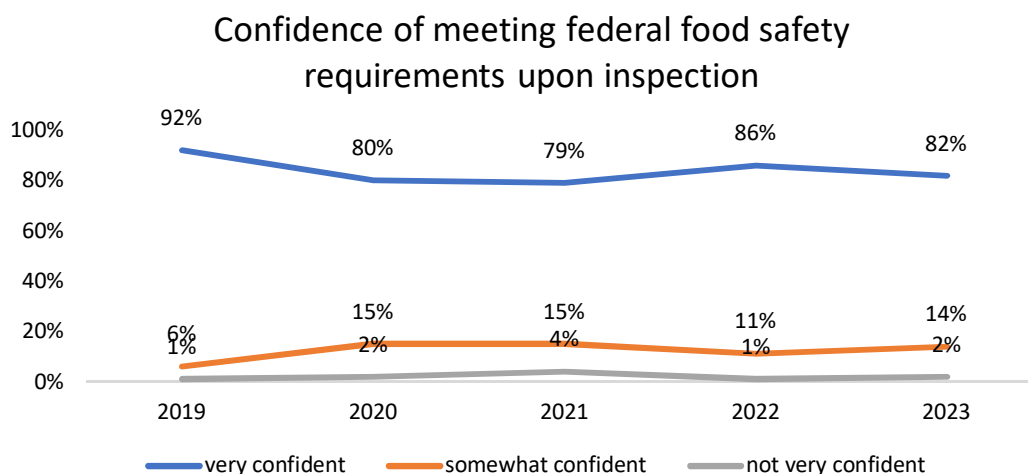
**TABLE 8 – A9. Which of the following items, if any, does your company have?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Traceability documents</b>	65%	77%	61%	65%	65%	75%	83%	82%	38%
<b>Traceability labelling</b>	61%	77%	59%	61%	61%	50%	77%	77%	50%
<b>A written preventive controls plan</b>	54%	74%	50%	51%	55%	41%	78%	75%	36%
<b>Safe Food for Canadians Licence</b>	52%	62%	67%	43%	48%	31%	66%	67%	50%
<b>Preventive controls, but not a written plan</b>	32%	25%	33%	32%	33%	40%	37%	32%	25%
<b>None of above</b>	13%	13%	9%	17%	14%	15%	8%	7%	20%
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103

Four in five (82%) businesses are very confident if they would meet the federal food safety requirements if they were subject to a CFIA inspection. As discussed, this is similar to the percentage of businesses who feel they have a very clear understanding of what food safety regulations apply to their business.

Businesses aware of SFCR tend to be more confident they could pass an inspection (85% are very confident), as are those who have used Ask CFIA (91% very confident).

Confidence levels are down 4 points from last year, but in line with what has been recorded in past years.



**TABLE 9 – A10. If your business was subject to a CFIA inspection today, how confident are you that you would meet the federal food safety requirements?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Very confident (6-7)</b>	82%	76%	79%	84%	85%	75%	88%	87%	82%
<b>Somewhat confident (4-5)</b>	13%	22%	17%	11%	12%	17%	8%	10%	16%
<b>Not very confident (1-3)</b>	2%	0%	2%	4%	1%	5%	2%	1%	2%
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103

### Qualitative insights

The majority of participants were familiar with SFCR, but for many this was superficial awareness. Few participants could proactively provide details about the regulations, or cite specific regulations their business had to follow.

Many businesses, particularly smaller businesses with less in-house policy and regulation knowledge and expertise, resort to hiring food regulation consultants to help navigate the layers of regulation they are required to comply with (including, but not limited to SFCR regulations). As such, not all participants were aware that federal regulations apply to inter-provincial trade; they just assumed federal regulations were only relevant for international trade.

Some of the common criticisms that participants raised related to the SFCR and other food regulations include:

- **Complicated and over burdensome regulations:** Many participants felt federal regulations they had to comply with were overly complicated and too burdensome. This view was more common among small-to-medium sized businesses.
- **Overlapping regulations:** Most Ontario-based participants, particularly those operating in Toronto, were frustrated with what they perceived to be redundant municipal and federal regulations they must comply with. Those in Toronto noted how expansive the municipal food safety regulations are, and that they often clash with federal regulations.
- **Relevant regulations:** Many participants from small-to-medium businesses felt they lacked a clear understanding of what regulations apply to them. One participant commented: “my biggest challenge is knowing what regulations apply to us and what they are, not actually achieving them.”

### 3. Outcome-based regulations

Most businesses have a general understanding of the concept of “outcome-based regulations”, though only 36% feel the concept is very clear.

**TABLE 10 – 17A. CFIA regulations are 'outcome-based'. How clear is the concept of 'outcome-based' regulations?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Very clear (6-7)</b>	36%	40%	41%	32%	36%	39%	33%	35%	36%
<b>Somewhat clear (4-5)</b>	32%	37%	27%	36%	31%	20%	45%	40%	28%
<b>Not clear (1-3)</b>	16%	22%	19%	16%	11%	24%	14%	14%	13%
Sample size	451	46	111	171	123	51	111	236	53

When asked to describe what outcome-based regulations are, few respondents could give detailed or overly technical answers of what the term meant, but there was one common theme: respondents said that outcome-based regulations are about results.

One respondent said “[they] prescribe the outcome, but not the means to the outcome”. This response sums up how many respondents describe the concept.

There is overwhelming support for outcome-based regulations: 87% support outcome-based regulations, and only 5% oppose them. This includes 33% who strongly support these regulations, with less than 1% strongly opposed.

Among those with a “very clear” understanding of what outcome-based regulations are, support sits at 91%.

**TABLE 11 – 18. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the concept of 'outcome-based' regulations?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Strongly support</b>	32%	41%	21%	33%	37%	20%	40%	35%	33%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	55%	41%	67%	54%	50%	61%	48%	50%	58%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	5%	12%	6%	2%	5%	3%	7%	5%	5%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	-
<b>Don't know</b>	8%	5%	6%	11%	8%	15%	4%	9%	5%
<b>Total support</b>	87%	82%	88%	87%	87%	81%	88%	85%	91%
<b>Total oppose</b>	5%	13%	6%	3%	5%	4%	7%	6%	5%
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103

### **Qualitative insights**

Though survey findings do not show a large divide between large and small businesses when it comes to support for outcome-based regulations, the focus groups showed some underlying concerns held by smaller businesses.

In general, large food businesses were supportive of outcome-based regulations, feeling it gave them more flexibility. Those who ran smaller businesses were not necessarily opposed to the concept of outcome-based regulations, but most felt these regulations can create a competitive advantage for larger businesses who have more resources to figure out efficient ways to achieve outcomes within the regulations. Participants from small businesses felt strongly that these type of regulations needed to be accompanied by guidance on how to meet the outcomes. Many suggested information-sharing between industry players could help them meet these outcomes, and felt the CFIA would be well positioned to facilitate this.

There was additional concern, particularly among Ontario businesses, that federal outcome-based regulations wouldn't be effective unless all regulatory bodies adopted them. They worried this would leave them needing to meet both the federal outcomes and the specific controls required by other regulatory bodies. To this point, one Quebec participant recounted his business purchasing a \$60,000 air emissions system to meet a regulation, but then an inspector from another regulator came to his business and informed him the system would not be useable under their regulations, so it had to be dismantled and sold.

#### 4. CFIA website and communications

The CFIA website is the most common place information is sought from about food safety regulations: 38% look at the CFIA website when looking for information, with the next closest source being Government of Canada website at 18%, and internal sources (e.g. the businesses' head office) at 13%.

Consistent with other topics, Quebec businesses lean heavily on the provincial government for information: just 9% of Atlantic Canadians, 5% of Ontarians, and 7% of Westerners look to provincial governments for information about food safety regulations, compared to 32% of Quebecers who rely on the MAPAQ website. This is more than the 20% of Quebecers who use the CFIA website.

Businesses with higher revenue and more employees use the CFIA website at higher rates compared to smaller organizations. Wholesalers/distributors use the website most often (59%), while agriculture (24%) and retail (26%) businesses use it less often.

**TABLE 12 – I1. Where do you look when looking for information about food safety regulations?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>CFIA website</b>	38%	42%	20%	40%	50%	24%	50%	59%	26%
<b>Government of Canada website</b>	18%	17%	14%	25%	14%	18%	12%	14%	22%
<b>Our head office/internally</b>	13%	6%	9%	15%	14%	1%	5%	6%	29%
<b>Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) website</b>	9%	-	32%	-	-	9%	5%	3%	14%
<b>Other professional organization</b>	6%	3%	9%	7%	4%	16%	7%	4%	2%
<b>Google search</b>	6%	5%	0%	8%	10%	5%	5%	7%	7%
<b>Internet/online (unspecified)</b>	5%	6%	6%	3%	6%	9%	5%	5%	3%
<b>Provincial government/organization website</b>	5%	9%	0%	5%	7%	2%	4%	1%	9%
<b>Word of mouth</b>	4%	-	2%	4%	6%	7%	1%	1%	5%
<b>Food safety professional website</b>	3%	19%	0%	3%	3%	1%	5%	2%	6%
<b>Other professional organization website</b>	3%	1%	4%	3%	3%	9%	3%	3%	0%
<b>Food safety professional</b>	3%	6%	2%	5%	2%	2%	4%	2%	3%
<b>Local health unit website</b>	3%	7%	-	4%	3%	-	7%	2%	4%
<b>CFIA (other)</b>	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	0%	4%	4%	1%
<b>Seminars</b>	2%	-	1%	2%	4%	3%	1%	1%	3%
<b>Provincial government/organization</b>	2%	1%	0%	0%	4%	4%	2%	1%	1%
<b>Local health unit</b>	2%	1%	-	5%	0%	-	1%	1%	3%
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103

(responses with less than 2% not shown in this table)

One-third (33%) of businesses find it very easy to get information from CFIA on what regulations apply to their business, while 32% find it somewhat easy, 15% find it not easy, while 20% don't know.

Agriculture businesses have the most difficulty getting information from CFIA about regulations, with less than half finding it very (19%) or somewhat (27%) easy, and a relatively high 19% describing it as not easy.

In focus groups, participants were generally positive about the state of the CFIA website, feeling it was detailed and thorough. The most common complain from participants was that there was sometimes too much content to wade through, so they felt the search function could be improved – or “how to” videos could explain to them how to make better use of the search function.

**TABLE 13 – I2. How easy is it to get information from CFIA on what regulations apply to your food business?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Very easy (6-7)</b>	33%	42%	33%	33%	33%	19%	33%	34%	42%
<b>Somewhat easy (4-5)</b>	32%	37%	27%	37%	30%	27%	43%	40%	24%
<b>Not easy (1-3)</b>	15%	20%	16%	12%	15%	19%	13%	18%	9%
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103

Those who have difficulty finding information, are most likely to say this is due to a “lack of clear information” or “difficulty understanding” the website (37%). Another 24% say their problem stems from the website not being user friendly. Relatively few say their issues are related to poor customer service (12%), there being too much information (12%), or their lack of a CFIA contact (6%).

**TABLE 14 – I3. What is the biggest challenge in finding information on CFIA regulations?**

	Total
<b>Lack of clear information / difficult to understand</b>	37%
<b>Website is not user-friendly / difficult to navigate</b>	24%
<b>Lack of contact with customer service / not responsive</b>	12%
<b>Too much information / high volume of information</b>	12%
<b>Not having a specific CFIA contact</b>	6%
<b>Research / finding information is too time-consuming</b>	1%
<b>OTHER</b>	5%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	4%
Sample size	<b>82</b>

Most find guidance about food regulation on CFIA's website at least somewhat clear, though a relatively high 23% of agriculture businesses feel that they are not clear. This aligns with the findings above showing that agriculture businesses have the most difficulty getting information from the CFIA.

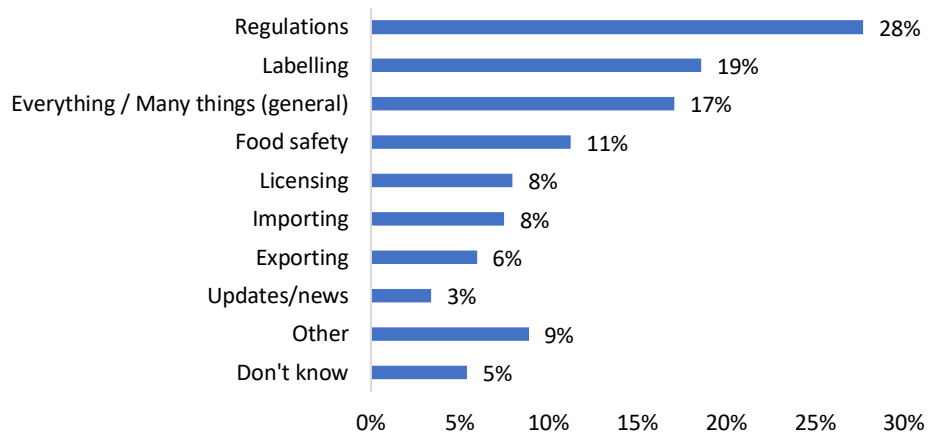
The most common topic that caused difficulty when looking for information was “regulations”, followed by “labelling”, and “food safety”.



**TABLE 15 – 14. How clear do you find the guidance about food regulations on CFIA’s website?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Very clear (6-7)</b>	39%	37%	30%	37%	43%	21%	39%	36%	56%
<b>Somewhat clear (4-5)</b>	44%	40%	45%	47%	43%	53%	51%	49%	23%
<b>Not clear (1-3)</b>	13%	17%	14%	13%	11%	23%	9%	13%	7%
Sample size	456	48	90	177	139	35	118	275	28

**Topics that businesses had difficulty getting information on**



## 5. Creative testing

### Qualitative insights

Few participants said they would click on any of the 4 ad concepts tested, though this was largely because they did not feel the subject matter applied to them, more so than because of problems with the creative.

Since the ads did not present the food safety licence as a “new” regulation, most participants, especially those who had been in their role for many years, assumed they had all their necessary licences. They assumed if regulations were changing, the government would contact them directly, rather than via an internet banner ad (or, at the least, the ad would say something like “new regulations”). Many also found the language of the ads soft, as if it was **suggesting** they get a licence, rather than **requiring** them to do it.

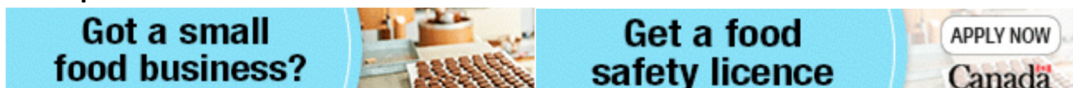
This problem was especially pronounced with the scrolling ads (Concepts A and B), shown below. Participants found the text ambiguous, and assumed it was referring to licences they already had. “I don’t think this licence is applicable to me, because if I needed it to operate, I would already have it” commented one participant. Added clarity would be helpful here, such as stating “you may need a **federal** food safety licence”.

Moreover, some found the term “small food business” awkward, as they didn’t necessarily see themselves as a “food business” (food being just one aspect of their business).

#### Concept A:



#### Concept B:



Concepts C and D (shown below) were more effective, due to the specific text of “importing food into Canada”. This at least caused participants to pause and think about whether or not it would apply to them. While most believed they already had the proper licensing, a few commented that if they were in the process of starting a business, they would consider clicking on it.

The French versions of these concepts included the language “you **need** a food safety licence”, which was more effective than “**get** a food safety licence”. This made participants feel the licence was a requirement, making them more likely to click on the ad to learn more.

**Concept C:**



**Concept D:**



A common suggestion was that the ads themselves should have a checklist indicating who is required to have the licence, so that people viewing the ad can easily see if the licence is applicable to them. Additionally, some participants felt videos might be a more appropriate medium for this, due to the complex nature of the licence being advertised and the niche audience it applies to.

The Government of Canada logo did add legitimacy to the advertisements, though some felt it could be made larger.

There was generally a negative reaction to the campaign landing page the ads led to. Participants felt it looked like any other government page rather than one that was directly related to the advertising. The first bluish impression of participants looking at the webpage was that information would be difficult to find.

French versions of these advertisements are available in the French report.

## 6. Ask CFIA

### Phone survey results

In the last year, 17% of businesses contacted the CFIA for guidance on food regulatory requirements. Businesses in Atlantic Canada (36%), with \$5 million or more in revenue (32%), processors/manufacturers (34%), wholesalers/distributors (35%), and exporters (40%) are more likely to have contacted the CFIA in the past year.

When asked how they contacted Ask CFIA, most indicate it was via phone (53% of those who contacted them) or e-mail (48%). Only 5% of those who contacted CFIA (1% overall) identify Ask CFIA by name as the channel they used.

**TABLE 16 – C1. In the last year, have you contacted the CFIA for guidance on how food regulatory requirements apply to your food business?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Yes</b>	17%	36%	13%	13%	20%	10%	34%	35%	1%
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103

Overall, 9% of businesses say they have ever used Ask CFIA, though this figure rises to 14% after being read a description of Ask CFIA.

Usage of Ask CFIA is significantly higher among larger businesses (29% among those with annual revenue of \$5million+, 37% among those with 100+ employees). Wholesalers/distributors are most likely to use the service (27%).

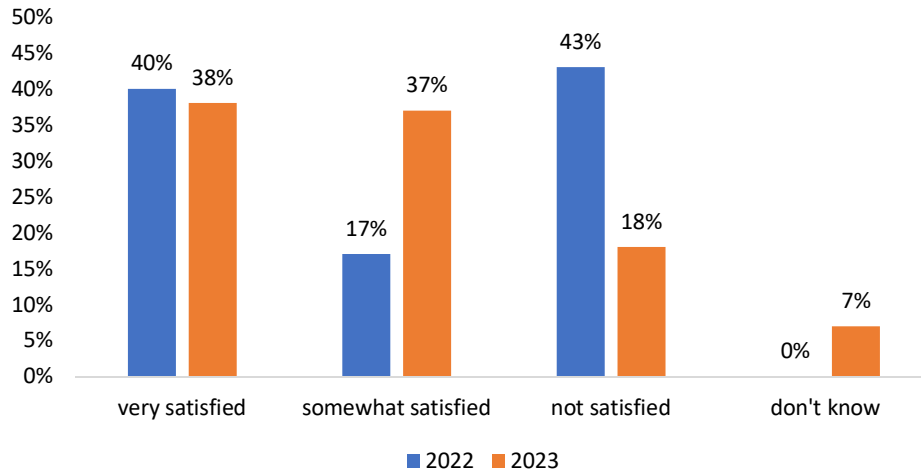
Of those who recall how many times they used Ask CFIA in the past year, 44% only used it once, 32% used it twice, and 24% used it 3 or more times.

**TABLE 17 – C3. Have you ever used a service offered by the CFIA called 'Ask CFIA'?**  
**C4. Do you think that any of your contact with the CFIA has ever involved using the Ask CFIA service?**

	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West	Agriculture	Processor/ Manufacturer	Wholesaler/ distributor	Retailer
<b>Recall using Ask CFIA</b>	9%	14%	9%	9%	9%	6%	15%	20%	1%
<b>Total recall (after definition)</b>	14%	20%	12%	15%	14%	9%	20%	27%	6%
Sample size	902	85	232	331	251	105	222	472	103

Overall satisfaction with Ask CFIA is up from 2022, with a large portion of respondents shifting from “not satisfied” to “somewhat satisfied”.

### Satisfaction with Ask CFIA



#### Online survey results

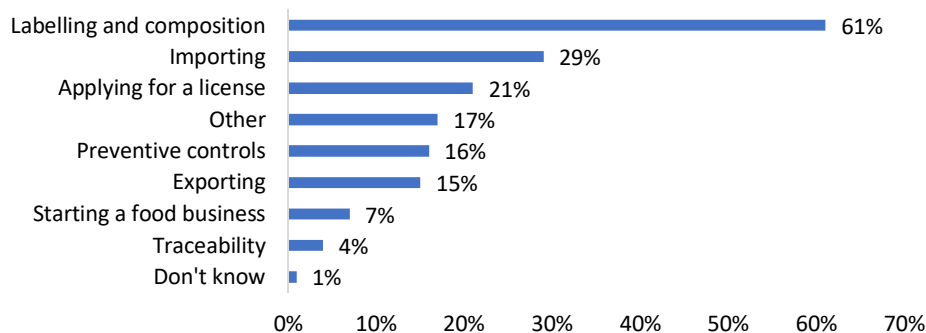
Notably, satisfaction levels of Ask CFIA are lower among respondents to the online survey. This could be a by-product of response bias, with those who had a worse experience with the service more interested in offering their feedback. Given this, we recommend relying on the results from the phone survey for tracking purposes and internal benchmarks. The online survey should be looked at more qualitatively, as a way to better understand areas of dissatisfaction.

**TABLE 18 – QF5 & QC7. Rate your overall level of satisfaction with the Ask CFIA service?**

	Online survey	Phone survey
<b>Very satisfied (6-7)</b>	27%	38%
<b>Somewhat satisfied (4-5)</b>	31%	37%
<b>Not satisfied (1-3)</b>	41%	18%

Labelling and composition was the most common topic asked about through Ask CFIA.

### Ask CFIA enquiry topics



Most are using Ask CFIA because they couldn't find the information they need on the CFIA website (76%), because their question was complicated (50%), or because information they found elsewhere wasn't clear (47%).

This is consistent with focus group findings, where participants generally said they only resorted to Ask CFIA after failing to find the information they needed on the website. Moreover, focus group participants who reported regular interactions with CFIA inspectors said they only used Ask CFIA in instances when these inspectors could not answer the questions for them.

**TABLE 19 – QF4. Why did you decide to use the Ask CFIA service?**

	Total
<b>Couldn't find information needed after searching on the CFIA website</b>	76%
<b>Question was complicated</b>	50%
<b>Information found elsewhere wasn't clear</b>	47%
<b>Heard about Ask CFIA from someone else</b>	6%
<b>Didn't realize I was using Ask CFIA</b>	5%
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	1%
<b>Don't know</b>	9%

The majority (64%) of Ask CFIA users report being very satisfied with the ease of using the service, while reviews are more mixed on the level of clarity and detail in responses. Meanwhile, the majority (64%) report being not satisfied when it comes to response time.

This is consistent with focus group findings, where the length of response time was the largest complaint, followed by responses "not answering the question". Focus group participants were generally satisfied with the process of using Ask CFIA, and felt this was a good way to deal with inquiries – so long as answers could be provided in a more timely and more satisfactory manner.

When asked to identify the most important element of Ask CFIA, respondents prioritize clarity of response (43%) over speed (25%) and level of detail (19%).

**TABLE 20 – QF7. Rate your level of satisfaction with the following:**

	Very satisfied (6-7)	Somewhat satisfied (4-5)	Not satisfied (1-3)
<b>The ease of using Ask CFIA</b>	64%	25%	10%
<b>The level of clarity in the Ask CFIA response to your enquiry</b>	29%	29%	41%
<b>The amount of time it took to respond to your enquiry</b>	16%	19%	64%
<b>The level of detail in the Ask CFIA response to your enquiry</b>	28%	25%	46%
<b>CFIA's support of your business to increase your awareness and understanding of food regulatory requirements</b>	28%	30%	35%
<b>CFIA's support of your business to achieve compliance with food regulatory requirements</b>	31%	26%	36%

## Qualitative insights

There was mixed feedback on Ask CFIA from the focus groups and IDIs. Some participants were pleased with Ask CFIA, both in terms of the timeliness and quality of the responses the service provides. These participants tended to be more knowledgeable about federal regulations, and were able to ask detailed and specific questions through Ask CFIA.

Other focus group participants were not as pleased with Ask CFIA. Complaints about the platform stemmed from 2 areas: delayed responses and ambiguous answers to questions. These participants complained they had experienced firsthand the Ask CFIA service taking multiple weeks or months to return answers. This timeline forced them to make decisions before receiving an answer, because they could not wait until their query was responded to before making a business decision.

Nearly all participants wanted to see service standards on response time. Most generally felt that one week would be reasonable, but there was openness to different service standards depending on the complexity and urgency of the question. Participants recognized that some questions would take more time to look up and answer, but felt they should at least get an update in those situations letting them know that someone was looking into their question.

The ambiguity of some responses was also a concern. Many participants noted that responses were not specific enough, and just repeated publicly available information, without taking into account the specific circumstances of the submission (“I used the service because the answer on the website wasn’t clear, but their answer just copy and pasted the website”). In these instances, they felt whoever was looking into their inquiry should ask them follow-up questions or pick up the phone and call them to discuss the issue, rather than just sending back an unsatisfactory response.

The intersection of slow responses and unhelpful responses was especially frustrating for participants, with several feeling the CFIA should just tell them up front if they couldn’t answer the question, rather than making them wait weeks for an unsatisfactory response. This frustrated some to the point where they decided they would not bother submitting queries to the service anymore.

Participants also felt it would be helpful to understand who at the CFIA was responding to their question, specifically if it was someone with subject matter expertise or just a “junior employee” looking at the website (“I’m basing huge decisions on this, I want to be sure this is coming from someone who knows what they’re talking about”).

The industry consultants, with whom IDIs were conducted, had a nuanced take on Ask CFIA. A refrain from one of the interviews sums up their view on the service: “garbage in, garbage out”. These consultants noted that the more specific the Ask CFIA submission, the better the response. On the other hand, general and unspecific queries received unhelpful responses that just repeated publicly-available information. The consultants were generally able to submit knowledgeable and detail queries, and found the answers to generally be useful - but they would like the response time to be shortened. The consultant who had been using the service for many years commented that it had been quick when it first launched, but had slowed during COVID.

The main criticism with Ask CFIA from the consultants was that it had replaced direct meetings and phone calls with CFIA staff. These consultants were able to call CFIA employees with questions about

regulations in the past, but they noted that was no longer allowed, with this practice replaced by Ask CFIA. The consultants preferred the timeliness of phone calls, as well as the ability to provide significant details about the query, and answer follow-up questions from the CFIA on the spot.

That said, in the focus groups among business decision makers themselves, most said they were fine with using Ask CFIA, as they recognized complicated questions needed time and research/consultation to answer. As a result, they were not clamouring for different contact points – rather, they just wanted Ask CFIA improved.



## Appendix A: Quantitative Research Methodology Report

Pollara conducted a telephone survey of 902 individuals who own a food business or work at one and are responsible for ensuring the business complies with food safety regulations. We also conducted an online survey of 200 individuals who had used Ask CFIA.

The questionnaires for these studies were designed by the CFIA in collaboration with Pollara. The surveys were offered to respondents in both English and French and completed based on their preferences.

A detailed discussion of the approach used to complete this research is presented below.

### Telephone Survey

#### Sample design and selection

The sampling plan for the telephone study was designed by Pollara in collaboration with CFIA. Sample was drawn based on a list of NAICS codes provided by CFIA. Our fieldwork subcontractor, Elemental DCI, used sample provided by InfoCanada, which has been used in the past for CFIA projects. The tables below list the NAICS codes used for sampling and the proportion of the sample that is constituted by each code on the InfoCanada list:

2022 NAICS Code	2022 NAICS Title	%
111211	Potato Farming	0.39%
111219	Other Vegetable (except Potato) and Melon Farming	1.30%
111331	Apple Orchards	0.33%
111334	Berry (except Strawberry) Farming	0.43%
111339	Other Noncitrus Fruit Farming	0.16%
111411	Mushroom Production	0.17%
111419	Other Food Crops Grown Under Cover	0.46%
111998	All Other Miscellaneous Crop Farming	13.40%
112120	Dairy Cattle and Milk Production	4.28%
112310	Chicken Egg Production	0.08%
112330	Turkey Production	0.07%
112519	Other Aquaculture	0.07%
112920	Horses and Other Equine Production	0.36%
112930	Fur-Bearing Animal and Rabbit Production	0.09%
112990	All Other Animal Production	1.75%
311211	Flour Milling	0.65%
311212	Rice Milling	0.03%
311213	Malt Manufacturing	0.06%
311221	Wet Corn Milling and Starch Manufacturing	0.03%
311224	Soybean and Other Oilseed Processing	0.03%

311225	Fats and Oils Refining and Blending	0.21%
311230	Breakfast Cereal Manufacturing	0.13%
311313	Beet Sugar Manufacturing	0.01%
311314	Cane Sugar Manufacturing	0.03%
311340	Nonchocolate Confectionery Manufacturing	0.39%
311351	Chocolate and Confectionery Manufacturing from Cacao Beans	0.59%
311352	Confectionery Manufacturing from Purchased Chocolate	0.15%
311411	Frozen Fruit, Juice, and Vegetable Manufacturing	0.13%
311412	Frozen Specialty Food Manufacturing	0.32%
311421	Fruit and Vegetable Canning	0.56%
311423	Dried and Dehydrated Food Manufacturing	0.16%
311512	Creamery Butter Manufacturing	0.04%
311513	Cheese Manufacturing	0.36%
311514	Dry, Condensed, and Evaporated Dairy Product Manufacturing	0.36%
311520	Ice Cream and Frozen Dessert Manufacturing	0.26%
311611	Animal (except Poultry) Slaughtering	1.26%
311612	Meat Processed from Carcasses	0.44%
311613	Rendering and Meat Byproduct Processing	0.04%
311615	Poultry Processing	0.22%
311710	Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging	0.89%
311811	Retail Bakeries	0.00%
311812	Commercial Bakeries	2.38%
311813	Frozen Cakes, Pies, and Other Pastries Manufacturing	0.14%
311821	Cookie and Cracker Manufacturing	0.17%
311824	Dry Pasta, Dough, and Flour Mixes Manufacturing from Purchased Flour	0.41%
311830	Tortilla Manufacturing	0.02%
311911	Roasted Nuts and Peanut Butter Manufacturing	0.08%
311919	Other Snack Food Manufacturing	0.24%
311920	Coffee and Tea Manufacturing	0.28%
311930	Flavoring Syrup and Concentrate Manufacturing	0.07%
311941	Mayonnaise, Dressing, and Other Prepared Sauce Manufacturing	0.16%
311942	Spice and Extract Manufacturing	0.20%
311991	Perishable Prepared Food Manufacturing	0.06%
311999	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing	1.59%
312111	Soft Drink Manufacturing	0.35%
312112	Bottled Water Manufacturing	0.05%
312113	Ice Manufacturing	0.13%
424410	General Line Grocery Merchant Wholesalers	5.09%
424420	Packaged Frozen Food Merchant Wholesalers	0.98%
424430	Dairy Product (except Dried or Canned) Merchant Wholesalers	1.14%
424440	Poultry and Poultry Product Merchant Wholesalers	0.40%

424450	Confectionery Merchant Wholesalers	0.66%
424460	Fish and Seafood Merchant Wholesalers	2.11%
424470	Meat and Meat Product Merchant Wholesalers	1.61%
424480	Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Merchant Wholesalers	4.54%
424490	Other Grocery and Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	8.30%
424510	Grain and Field Bean Merchant Wholesalers	1.35%
424590	Other Farm Product Raw Material Merchant Wholesalers	0.35%
445110	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Retailers (except Convenience Retailers)	32.15%
445120	Convenience Retailers	0.00%
445230	Fruit and Vegetable Retailers	2.58%
445210	Meat Retailers	0.00%
445220	Fish and Seafood Retailers	0.00%
445292	Confectionery and Nut Retailers	1.72%
445299	All Other Specialty Food Retailers	0.00%

The final data was weighted to the proportion of businesses that fall into each NAICS code and province as per InfoCanada information.

### Data collection

The surveys were conducted in English and in French, based on the respondent's preference, from February 2 to March 16, 2023. The surveys were undertaken with Elemental DCI's Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) systems.

### Targets/weighting

A quota on retail-only businesses was applied to this survey, limiting them to 200 responses, or 22% of the sample. Data was also monitored to ensure that multiple locations from the same franchise were not overrepresented in the sample. The final data was weighted by industry and province, based on the proportion of businesses that fall into each NAICS code and province, as per Info Canada's information. The margin of error for this study was +/-3.3%, 19 times out of 20.

### Nonresponse

Up to 5 call-backs were made to each phone number, at different times of the day, to encourage a higher response rate. However, the potential for non-response bias exists since certain types of people may be less willing to participate in research.

## Quality controls

Prior to launching the survey, Pollara tested the links to ensure programming matched the questionnaire. Elemental DCI conducted pre-tests on the survey on 10 English and 10 French respondents. Upon completion of the pre-test, Pollara reviewed the recordings to identify ways in which questions could be rephrased to avoid confusion or save time.

Elemental DCI's data collection quality control process is concretely based on the following guide:

Quality control is critical to data collection and Elemental Data Collection meets or exceeds industry standards. The firm has developed strict quality control procedures that occur throughout the survey process.

With the CATI and digital phone network Elemental Data Collection can monitor the visual and audio of every interviewing station in real time as outlined in the interviewer training section of this proposal. Interviewers are monitored on 10 essential attributes for data collection. Chief among these are sample management, introduction standards, refusal conversion (as relevant), voice control, survey management, response probing, clarification of open-ended responses, and rapport with the respondent. For each attribute, an interviewer is given a score out of 5 where 5 means "Exceeds expectations", 4 means "Meets expectations", 3 means "Meets many expectations but improvement needed", 2 means "Not meeting expectations" and 1 means "Fails requirement – retraining required". An interviewer is considered a pass if they obtain an overall score of 80%. If an interviewer achieves a 1 on any attribute, this triggers an automatic 125-hour probation and retraining. After a survey is monitored, the interviewer is provided real-time feedback ensuring that any adjustments are made immediately. Any interviewer who scores below the acceptable standard is removed from the project.

Elemental Data Collection also undertakes additional quality controls through introduction monitoring, which is used to assist in improving response rates, and therefore reducing the risk of non-response bias.

### a) Data validity

After the first night of data collection, the survey data goes through a quality control check by having a Research Analyst verify the survey frequencies. This procedure is repeated on an ongoing basis throughout the entire field period at fixed 15% completion milestones. The Research Analyst is looking for outlying data, and in the case of tracking studies, large changes over time that may require closer examination to validate the accuracy of the data. Upon completion of the fieldwork, all data files, again, undergo a quality control check by 2 staff members: the initial programmer and a second senior programmer.

Upon completion of the survey, the data file will undergo a quality control check by the Research Analyst and a second Research Analyst before it is released. Data validation measures will include cleaning the files to ensure that all skip patterns worked properly and there are no missing or extra data supplied in the final data set. We will ensure that the collected data is cleaned and validated in accordance with industry standards.

### b) Coding procedures

Elemental Data Collection’s coding department consists of a bilingual lead coder, who is responsible for the creation of the code lists, and 4 coding staff, of which 2 are bilingual. In terms of verbatim responses, all cleaning of open-ended responses is conducted directly in the CATI module, thereby eliminating any data transfer errors to outside word processing software packages. Additionally, to improve the quality of the verbatim responses, at the end of each interview, the interviewer is prompted by the CATI system to edit their open ends. This allows the interviewer to directly edit their responses once the respondent is off the phone. Our coding department is responsible for continually reviewing all verbatims during the field period to ensure completeness of verbatims. Any verbatims that are of a concern are flagged to the Survey Field Manager and in consultation with Field Supervisors and/or the Project Authority, corrective actions are implemented.

#### c) Interviewer training and supervision

Elemental Data Collection has an experienced and well-trained team that are all Canadian based, located in Ottawa, Ontario. The Call Centre Manager works with their team of supervisors and quality assurance personnel to ensure that the project is successfully executed in terms of data quality and quota management as well as callback and staff management. All members of this team were previous interviewers at Elemental Data Collection and have had extensive training and extensive experience in the industry conducting surveys.

## Reporting

Results are presented in table format in this report. The full crosstabs have also been included in a csv file under a separate cover – these ones using subscripts to indicate where the difference between the demographic groups analysed are significantly higher than results found in other columns in the table. These demographic differences have been highlighted when they are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. The statistical test used to determine the significance of the results was the Z-test.

This study references tracking data from previous waves of CFIA research with food businesses. Previous reports can be found at the links below.

- 2021-2022 report.
- All previous reports.

## Disposition Report

<b>Total Numbers Attempted</b>	<b>12980</b>
<b>Out-of-scope - Invalid</b>	<b>2184</b>
<b>Unresolved (U)</b>	<b>5826</b>
No answer/Answering machine	5826
<b>In-scope - Non-responding (IS)</b>	<b>1053</b>
Language barrier	92
Incapable of completing (ill/deceased)	90
Callback (Respondent not available)	871

<b>Total Asked</b>	<b>3917</b>
Refusal	2403
Termination	156
<b>In-scope – Responding</b>	<b>1358</b>
Completed Interview	902
NQ - Intraprovincial only	13
NQ - Business is not food-related	42
Quota Full (Retail-only)	401
<b>Refusal Rate</b>	<b>65.33</b>
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>12.58</b>
<b>Incidence (Overall)</b>	<b>66.42</b>

### Weighted and Unweighted Totals

<b>Region</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>	<b>Weighted total</b>
Atlantic	85	58
Quebec	232	247
Ontario	331	281
Manitoba / Saskatchewan	79	108
Alberta	57	91
British Columbia	115	116
<b>Language</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>	<b>Weighted total</b>
English	707	682
French	195	221
<b>Annual revenue</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>	<b>Weighted total</b>
Less than \$1 million	179	291
\$1 million to less than \$5 million	387	358
\$5 million or more	222	138
<b>Number of employees</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>	<b>Weighted total</b>
1 to 9	492	563
10 to 99	272	206
100 to 499	18	16
500 or more	4	2
<b>Business sector</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>	<b>Weighted total</b>
Agriculture	105	208
Processor/Manufacturer	222	124
Wholesale/Distributor	472	249
Retailer	103	321
<b>Business type</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>	<b>Weighted total</b>
Retail-only	201	393
<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>	<b>Weighted total</b>
Indigenous owned or operated	32	28

25% or more of individuals with senior management role are women	528	549
25% or more of individuals with senior management role are visible minorities	196	169

## Online Survey

### Sample design and selection

The sampling plan for the online study was designed by Pollara in collaboration with CFIA. Sample was drawn based on a list of previous Ask CFIA users who had provided their e-mail address to CFIA and consent to be contacted. CFIA then sent them an invitation to participate in an online survey in either English or French.

Both the invitation and the landing page for the survey stressed that participation in the survey is voluntary, and that information provided would remain private and confidential, in compliance with the Privacy Act and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). Participants were provided assurance that none of their identifiable information would be shared with CFIA.

### Data collection

The surveys were conducted online, in English and in French, based on the respondent's preference, from February 2 to 19, 2023.

Demographic and company information about all respondents was not known, and respondents were not forced to answer these questions, to ensure they were comfortable participating. As such, the final data was not weighted. This introduces the potential for sample bias, as certain types of individuals would be more likely to leave their contact information after using Ask CFIA, and to complete a survey on their experience. Generally, we expect individuals with stronger feelings about their CFIA experiences would participate in this survey.

Participants took a median length of 7.0 minutes to complete the survey. All respondents who started the survey completed it.

### Quality controls

Prior to launching the survey, Pollara tested the links to ensure programming matched the questionnaire in both languages, including the correct use of skips and randomizations. A "soft launch" of the survey data was conducted the first night of field to ensure respondents were able to access the survey, and did not have any issues with the question wording. Pollara reviewed soft launch data before proceeding to full launch.

**Respondent Totals**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>
Atlantic	16
Quebec	57
Ontario	79
Manitoba / Saskatchewan	8
Alberta	12
British Columbia	21
Prefer not to say	7
<b>Language</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>
English	168
French	32
<b>Annual revenue</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>
Less than \$1 million	46
\$1 million or more	58
Prefer not to say	96
<b>Number of employees</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>
1 to 99	119
100 or more	64
Prefer not to say	17
<b>Business sector</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>
Agriculture	11
Processor/Manufacturer	103
Wholesale/Distributor	21
Retailer	25
Prefer not to say	40
<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Unweighted total</b>
Men	78
Women	102
Other	0
Prefer not to say	20



## Appendix B: Qualitative Research Methodology Report

### Methodology

The qualitative phase of the research included a series of 6 online focus groups with owners and employees of Canadian food businesses, and 2 in-depth-interviews with industry consultants, all of whom were responsible for regulatory compliance. The groups were approximately 90 minutes in length with the IDIs 45 minutes in length. All participants received an honorarium of \$350.

The table below shows the date, time and composition of each group, along with the number of participants per group.

Group	Region	Language	Date	Number of participants
General focus group #1	Atlantic Canada	English	January 24	6
General focus group #2	Ontario	English	January 25	4
General focus group #3	Western and Northern Canada	English	January 26	5
General focus group #4	Quebec	French	January 31	5
Ask CFIA focus group #1	National	English	February 27	6
Ask CFIA IDI #1	Atlantic Canada	English	March 3	1
Ask CFIA IDI #2	Atlantic Canada	English	March 7	1
Ask CFIA focus group #2	Quebec	French	March 9	3

### Recruitment

Participants were recruited using a recruitment screener (see Appendix D). For each focus group, 6 participants were recruited, while IDIs were one-on-one interviews. All participants were responsible for regulatory compliance and food safety within their business. The screener contained a series of questions to establish business type, business activities, and business size, among other characteristics.

Respondents were recruited from an Info Canada list, based on the same NAICS codes included in the quantitative research.

### Moderation

All focus groups were moderated by a member of the Pollara project team, with other members taking notes. Several representatives from CFIA viewed the groups – both live, and on tape.

Our team regularly briefed CFIA on the functionality of the discussion guide, as well as on issues relating to recruitment, turnout, and technology. Together, we discussed the findings on an ongoing basis in order to allow for probing of areas that require further investigation in subsequent groups.

## A note about interpreting qualitative research results

It is important to note that qualitative research is a form of scientific, social, policy, and public opinion research. Focus group research is not designed to help a group reach a consensus or to make decisions, but rather to elicit the full range of ideas, attitudes, experiences and opinions of a selected sample of participants on a defined topic. Because of the small numbers involved the participants cannot be expected to be thoroughly representative in a statistical sense of the larger population from which they are drawn and findings cannot reliably be generalized beyond their number.

## Glossary of terms

The following is a glossary of terms which explains the generalizations and interpretations of qualitative terms used throughout the report. These phrases are used when groups of participants share a specific point of view and emerging themes can be reported. Unless otherwise stated, it should not be taken to mean that the rest of participants disagreed with the point; rather others either did not comment or did not have a strong opinion on the question.

<b>Generalization</b>	<b>Generalization Interpretation</b>
Few	Few is used when less than 10% of participants have responded
Several	Several is used when fewer than 20% of the participants responded
Some	Some is used when more than 20% but significantly fewer than 50% of participants respondents with similar answers.
Many	Many is used when nearly 50% of participants responded with
Majority	Majority or plurality are used when more than 50% but fewer than 75% of the participants responded with similar answers.
Most	Most is used when more than 75% of the participants responded with similar answers.
Vast majority	Vast majority is used when nearly all participants responded with similar answers, but several had differing views.
Unanimous/Almost all	Unanimous or almost all are used when all participants gave similar answers or when the vast majority of participants gave similar answers and the remaining few declined to comment on the issue in question.

## Appendix C: SFCR Survey Questionnaire

### Introduction

Hello/Bonjour [**In Quebec:** Bonjour/Hello], (pause...) I am calling on behalf of the Government of Canada as we are conducting a brief survey of food businesses. I want to assure you that this is not a sales call. It is research sponsored by the Government of Canada. The survey we're conducting is voluntary, confidential and anonymous. This important research will help the Government understand industry's views on food safety practices and regulations. I won't ask your name, but I am asking for 15 minutes of your time.

I am hoping to speak with the person in your company who is most responsible for the safety of the food products that your business imports, produces or sells. This could be the owner of the company or a manager who oversees the sale of food products, the food safety manager or quality assurance manager. Are you the right person to speak with?

[**IF NO:** Can you please direct me to the correct person?] [**Repeat from beginning if transferred**]

#### [Once correct person identified]

Would you prefer that I continue in English or French? Préférez-vous continuer en français ou en anglais?

[**Note: if at this point the respondent prefers to respond in French then the interviewer must be able to either proceed with the interview in French or read the following statement: "Je vous remercie. Quelqu'un vous rappellera bientôt pour mener le sondage en français."**]

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from \_\_\_\_\_. The Government of Canada has hired our company to do the survey.

The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. We can call back at a more convenient time if you prefer [**IF SO:** Schedule a follow up call] The information you provide will be administered according to the requirements of the Privacy Act and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act. This is designed to protect your privacy.

**PERSUADER IF NEEDED:** This survey is registered with the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC). Should you have any questions about the survey, I can give you a contact person within the CFIA.

### Screeners and Classification

S1. [**Record from sample – not asked**] Province/territory

**S2. [Record from sample – not asked]** Full 8-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code

**S3. [Record from sample – not asked]** Revenue

**S4. [Record from sample – not asked]** Number of employees in Canada

**S5. [Record from sample – not asked]** Business type

Agriculture	1
Processor or Manufacturer	2
Wholesaler or distributor	3
Retailer	4

Let's start with a few questions to help determine the nature of your business ...

**S6. Does your business do any of the following? [Select all that apply – Code as “None of the above” if they do not do any of these]**

Import food products	1
Export food products	2
Send food products to another province or territory (If asked: For example, selling, wholesaling, distributing)	3
None of the above	99

**[ASK IF S6 = 1]**

**S7. Do you import food products yourself or through a broker?**

Import ourselves	1
Import through a broker	2
Both	3
Other	4
Don't know	98

**S8. And does your business do any of the following? [Select all that apply – Code as “None of the above” if they do not do any of these]**

Prepare, package or label food for sending to another province/territory or country	1
Prepare, package or label food for trade within your province/territory	2
None of the above	99

**S9.** And does your business conduct any of the following? [Select all that apply – Code as “None of the above” if they do not do any of these]

Sell food directly to consumers (If asked: This would mean you have a store front)	1
Sell food products online	2
None of the above	99

**[ASK IF S9 = 2 Sell food products online]**

**S10.** Do you...? [Select all that apply – Code as “None of the above” if they do not do any of these]

Sell food products online within your province/territory	1
Sell food products online to other provinces or other countries	2
None of the above	99

**[For S6, S8, S9, S10 code as "Retail only" if:**

- select “none of the above” at S6, AND only select “2” or “none of the above” in S8
  - o Exception: do not code as “Retail only” if they select “2” in S10

**MAXIMUM of n = 200 Retail Only]**

**[Flag as “intraprovincial only” if select “2” at S8 AND select “none of the above” in S6 and S9 - THANK AND TERMINATE]**

**[ASK IF "None of the above" in S6, S8, and S9]**

**S11.** What is your company's main business activity? [Open end]

**[If business is food related then continue. If respondent does not mention anything to do with food, then THANK AND TERMINATE]**

**S12.** Which of the following foods does your company deal with? [Randomize, with “Other” asked last] [allow multiple responses]

Dairy products	1
Egg and processed egg products	2
Fish	3
Fresh fruits or vegetables	4
Honey	5
Maple syrup or maple products	6
Meat products and food animals	7

Processed fruit or vegetable products	8
Manufactured foods (if asked: This would include confectionary, snack foods, beverages, fats and oils, infant food, nuts, seeds, spices, condiments, cereals and pastas)	9
Or anything else? (SPECIFY: Recode if related to anything on list above)	77

## Awareness of Food Safety Regulations

Let's turn to the subject of food safety regulations, specifically the ones that are overseen by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, commonly known as the CFIA.

**A1.** On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means "not at all clearly" and 7 means "very clearly", how well do you feel you understand the food safety regulations that apply to your business? [Repeat scale as needed]

Not at all clearly	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Very clearly	7
Don't know [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	98

**A2.** Have you seen, read or heard anything about the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know / Not Sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	98

**[ASK IF A2=1]**

**A3.** Where did you hear, see or read about the regulations? [Open end] [Accept multiple responses if offered]

Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	98
--	----

**A4.** As far as you know, do you think the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations apply to your business?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	98

**A5.** As far you know do you think the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations apply to on-line sales of food products?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	98

**[ASK IF S6=1]**

**A6.** Were you aware that a Safe Food for Canadians licence is required to import food products into Canada?

Yes, clearly aware	1
Yes, somewhat or vaguely aware	2
No, not aware	3
Don't know / Not Sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	98

**[Skip if retail-only]**

**A7.** From your perspective, which of the following food safety requirements of the SFCR is your biggest challenge? Would it be...?

[Randomize 1-5] [Read 1-5] [single response]

Obtaining or maintaining a Safe Food for Canadians Licence	1
Implementing preventive controls	2
Maintaining written preventive control plan	3
Maintaining traceability records	4
Implementing traceability labelling on products	5
Other [Specify] [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	6
None of these are challenges [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	99

**A8.** Do you use a private food safety or quality control certification system such as GFSI, ISO or QMP? [If asked: GFSI = Global Food Safety Initiative; ISO = International Organization for Standardization and QMP = Quality Management Program]

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	98

**A9.** Which of the following items, if any, does your company have? [Select all that apply – Code as “None of the above” if they do not do any of these]

Safe Food for Canadians Licence	1
---------------------------------	---

Preventive controls, but not a written plan	2
A written preventive controls plan	3
Traceability documents	4
Traceability labelling (If asked: This is information on the label of a product that allows both you and your customers to identify whether a particular food is subject to a recall)	5
None of above	99

**A10.** If your business was subject to a CFIA inspection today, how confident are you that you would meet the federal food safety requirements? Please rate your view on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means not at all confident and 7 means very confident. [Repeat scale as needed]

Not at all confident	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Very confident	7
Don't know [Do not read]	98

**A11.** Are you aware of the Establishment-based Risk Assessment, or ERA model, which the CFIA uses to help detect areas or businesses that pose a higher food safety risk?

Yes, clearly aware	1
Yes, somewhat or vaguely aware	2
No, not aware	3
Don't know / Not Sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	98

## Transparency

**T1-3.** In your opinion, how transparent do you think the CFIA is when it comes to each of the following. Please answer on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being not at all transparent, and 7 being very transparent. [repeat scale as needed]

T1. Evaluating the food safety risk of an establishment?	
T2. Determining if there are non-compliances of regulations?	
T3. Reporting and publishing non-compliance results?	
Not at all transparent	1
	2
	3



	4
	5
	6
Very transparent	7
Don't know [Do not read]	98

**T4.** CFIA has several enforcement actions that it can use when cases of non-compliance are found. One is an Administrative Monetary Penalty, also called an AMP. CFIA publishes a summary list of AMPs on its website. [Rotate next 2 statements]

1) There are some people who feel CFIA should publish the names of companies that receive AMPs, as this helps the whole industry improve by highlighting quality.

2) There are some people who feel CFIA should not publish these names, as AMPs can happen to good companies

Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose CFIA publishing names of companies that receive AMPs?

Strongly support	1
Somewhat support	2
Somewhat oppose	3
Strongly oppose	4
Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	98

## Information Search and Understanding

**I1.** Where do you look when looking for information about food safety regulations? [Ask open, code on list below, accept multiple responses]

CFIA website	1
Government of Canada website	2
Other website – obtain specific website: _____	76
Seminars	3
Word of mouth	4
Other (please specify): _____	77
Don't know	98

**I2.** How easy is it to get information from the CFIA on what regulations apply to your food business? Please answer on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being not at all easy and 7 being very easy.

Not at all easy	1
	2
	49

	3
	4
	5
	6
Very easy	7
Don't know [Do not read]	98

**[ASK IF I2 = 1 OR 2]**

**I3.** What is the biggest challenge in finding information on CFIA regulations? [Ask open, code on list below, accept multiple responses]

Website is not user-friendly / difficult to navigate	1
Lack of clear information / difficult to understand	2
Lack of notifications / updates	3
Too much information / high volume of information	4
Lack of contact with customer service / not responsive	5
Research / finding information is too time-consuming	6
Not having a specific CFIA contact	7
Other (please specify): _____	77
Don't know / Refused	98
None / No challenges	99

**[ASK IF I1 = 1]**

**I4.** How clear do you find the guidance about food regulations on CFIA's website? Please answer on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being not at all clear and 7 being very clear.

Not at all clear	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Very clear	7
Don't know [Do not read]	98

**I5.** Have you ever had difficulty getting information you needed from CFIA?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know [Do not read]	98

**[IF I5 = 1]**

**I6.** What specific topics did you have difficulty getting information on? [Open end]

**[SPLIT SAMPLE – HALF ASKED I7A, HALF ASKED I7B]**

**I7A.** Some CFIA regulations are “outcome-based”. How clear is the concept of “outcome-based” regulations to you personally? Please answer on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being not at all clear and 7 being very clear.

Not at all clear	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Very clear	7
Don't know [Do not read]	98

**I7B.** Can you briefly describe what “outcome-based” regulations mean? If you are not familiar with this concept, simply say so. [ask open – include hard code for “not familiar”]

**I8.** Outcome-based regulations means the regulations specify the outcome of a requirement that a business needs to achieve, rather than the process to apply to meet that outcome. So businesses have more flexibility to choose what they will do to meet the regulated outcome, as long as they are able to meet the outcome. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the concept of “outcome-based” regulations?

Strongly support	1
Somewhat support	2
Somewhat oppose	3
Strongly oppose	4
Don't know/Not Sure	98

**Ask CFIA**

**C1.** In the last year, have you contacted the CFIA for guidance on how food regulatory requirements apply to your food business?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	98

**[ASK IF C1 = 1]**

**C2.** How did you contact the CFIA for guidance? Did you ... [Ask open, code on list below, accept multiple responses]

Phone	1
In-person at a CFIA office	2
Use the online “contact us” form on the CFIA website	3
Ask CFIA	4
Email	5
Other [Specify]	77
Don’t know	98

**C3.** Have you ever used a service offered by the CFIA called "Ask CFIA"?

Yes	1
No	2
Don’t know	98

**[IF C3 = 2 OR 98]**

**C4.** Ask CFIA is a service to provide the food industry with one point of entry through the online “Contact us” form to ask questions about food regulatory requirements. Ask CFIA provides written answers to food regulatory questions submitted by Canadian businesses and non-resident importers.

Based on this definition, do you think that any of your contact with the CFIA has ever involved using the Ask CFIA service?

Yes	1
No	2
Don’t know	98

**[SKIP IF C4 = 2 OR 98]**

**C5.** In the last year, how many times have you used the Ask CFIA service? (if can’t be specific, ask them to estimate)

Did not use in past year	1
1 time	2
2 times	3
3 times	4
4 times	5
5 or more	6
Don’t know	98

**[SKIP IF C4 = 2 OR 98]**

**C6.** How likely would you be to use “Ask CFIA” in the future. Please use a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all likely and 7 is very likely?

1 – Not at all likely	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7 – Very likely	7
Don't know	98

**[SKIP IF C4 = 2 OR 98]**

**C7.** Rate your overall level of satisfaction with the Ask CFIA service. Please use a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all satisfied and 7 means very satisfied.

1 – Not at all satisfied	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7– Very satisfied	7
Don't know	98

**[ASK IF C7 = 1 TO 7]**

**C8.** Please expand on why you provided that rating? [ASK OPEN]

## Demographics / Language requirements

Thank you for your answers. We just have a few final demographic questions to classify your responses.

**D1.** Would it be helpful to you to have information about food safety regulations in a language other than French or English?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	98

**[IF D1 = 1]**

**D2.** Which languages would you or your employer use? [Ask open, code on list below, accept multiple responses]

Arabic	1
Chinese (no indication given of which version)	2
Chinese simplified	3
Chinese traditional	4
German	5
Hindi	6
Portuguese	7
Punjabi	8
Spanish	9
Thai	10
Turkish	11
Other (specify)	77
Don't know	98

**D3. Would you classify your company as Indigenous-owned or -operated?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	98

**D4. Can you provide an approximate percentage of individuals in your company with a senior management role that identify as women?**

Women _____ % [minimum: 0, maximum: 100]	
Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99

[Persuader if asked: The Government of Canada has a policy that is designed to ensure that the diverse population of Canada is equally supported and in order to better understand the composition of leadership at Canadian food businesses we are asking about gender and other demographic characteristics of the leadership group. An estimate is fine for this question and if you do not know, that is fine as well.]

**D5. Can you provide an approximate percentage of individuals in your company with a senior management role that might identify as a visible minority?**

Visible minority _____ % [minimum: 0, maximum: 100]	
Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99

[Persuader if asked: The Government of Canada has a policy that is designed to ensure that the diverse population of Canada is equally supported and in order to better understand the composition of

leadership at Canadian food businesses we are asking about race and other demographic characteristics of the leadership group. An estimate is fine for this question and if you do not know, that is fine as well.]

## Appendix D: Qualitative Research Recruitment Screener

### Group Details

- Recruit 6 participants for 5-6 to show
- Sessions are 90 minutes
- Focus on manufacturers/processors, importers and exporters
- No retail or agricultural businesses will be recruited for focus groups

### Group Composition

- Six focus groups will be conducted.
- The first 4 will be conducted among individuals in a managerial role. These will be recruited using NAICS codes: (note: retail and agriculture sample codes will not be used for the focus group recruit)
- The last 2 groups will be specifically with those that have used the “Ask CFIA” service

Date	Audience	Language
January 24, 2023	Atlantic business group (would also include any Quebec participants who would rather participate in English)	English
January 25, 2023	Ontario business group	English
January 26, 2023	West + North business group	English
January 31, 2023	French business group (primarily recruited from Quebec, but would include participants from elsewhere more comfortable in French)	French

2 groups will also be conducted among users of the “Ask CFIA” service, using sample provided by CFIA:

Date	Audience	Language
February 27, 2023	French Ask CFIA users	French
March 9, 2023	English Ask CFIA users	English

- Aim for half of the participants per group to be women.
- Aim for at least 2 Indigenous persons and 8 racialized persons across the 6 groups.



Category of business? [RECORD FROM SAMPLE – DO NOT READ]

Agriculture	THANK AND TERMINATE
Processor or manufacturer	[MINIMUM 4 PROCESSORS/MANUFACTURERS PER GROUP]
Wholesaler or distributor	
Retailer	THANK AND TERMINATE
Other [DO NOT READ]	THANK AND TERMINATE IF UNRELATED TO TOP 3 CATEGORIES

### Screener Content

Group # Region Language Time

Hello/Bonjour, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling on behalf of Pollara, a national public opinion research firm. We're organizing a series of discussion groups on behalf of the Government of Canada. We are looking for people who would be willing to participate in a 90-minute online discussion group on the topic of their business' experience with food safety requirements. For their time, participants will receive an honorarium of \$350. May I continue?

Yes CONTINUE  
No THANK AND TERMINATE

Participation is voluntary. We are interested in hearing your opinions; no attempt will be made to sell you anything or change your point of view. The format is a "round table" discussion with up to 6 participants, led by a research professional. All opinions expressed will remain anonymous and confidential, and no individual participant will ever be identified in our final report.

I would like to ask you a few questions to see if you or someone in your company qualify to participate. This will take about 5 minutes. May I continue?

Yes CONTINUE  
No THANK AND TERMINATE

This call may be monitored or audio recorded for quality control and evaluation purposes.

#### ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION IF NEEDED:

The call is monitored to ensure that I am reading the questions correctly and collecting your answers accurately, and to ensure that we're asking the right questions to meet our clients' research requirements. If the call is audio recorded, it is only for the purposes of playback to the interviewer for a performance evaluation immediately after the interview is conducted, or it can be used by the Project Manager to evaluate the questionnaire.

All audio tapes are destroyed after the evaluation.

1. Can you please provide me with your job title? [RECORD]

2. Are you the owner or manager or this company?

Yes  
No

3. Do you have primary responsibility for the food safety of the food products that your business produces or sells?

Yes  
Shared responsibility [DO NOT PROMPT FOR THIS, BUT ACCEPT IF OFFERED]  
No THANK AND TERMINATE

[IF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY]

3B. Have you been directly involved in key decisions around food safety or meeting food safety regulations in recent years?

Yes  
No THANK AND TERMINATE  
Not sure THANK AND TERMINATE

4. In which province or territory do you live?

Newfoundland and Labrador  
Nova Scotia  
New Brunswick  
Prince Edward Island  
Quebec  
Ontario  
Manitoba  
Saskatchewan  
Alberta  
British Columbia  
Nunavut  
Northwest Territories  
Yukon

[ASK ONLY FOR “ASK CFIA” GROUPS]

5. In the past year, did you use the “Ask CFIA” online service?

Yes  
No THANK AND TERMINATE  
Don't know THANK AND TERMINATE

6. Please specify the major food categories or types of food your business specializes in: [RECORD]

7. I'm going to read a few types of businesses activities. For each, indicate if it applies to your business or not. [READ LIST, PAUSING AFTER EACH SO THEY CAN ANSWER IF IT APPLIED] [ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES]

Import food products

Export food products

Send food products to another province or territory (If asked, for example, wholesaler/distributors)

Prepare, package or label food for sending to another province/territory or country (If asked, activities would include manufacture, process, treat or preserve)

Prepare, package or label food for trade within your province/territory (If asked, activities would include manufacture, process, treat or preserve)

Sell food directly to consumers (store front)

Sell food products online

None of the above THANK AND TERMINATE

[IF SELL FOOD PRODUCTS ONLINE]

8. Do you...? [READ LIST, PAUSING AFTER EACH SO THEY CAN ANSWER IF IT APPLIED] [ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES]

Sell food products online within your province/territory

Sell food products online to other provinces or other countries

["THANK AND TERMINATE" IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING IN 7 AND 8:

- only select "Sell food directly to consumers (store front)"
- only select "sell food products online" in 7 and only select "Sell food products online within your province/territory" in 8
- only select "Prepare, package or label food for trade within your province/territory (If asked, activities would include manufacture, process, treat or preserve)"]

9. Are you... [READ LIST] [AIM FOR AT LEAST 2 MALE AND AT LEAST 2 FEMALE RESPONDENTS PER GROUP]

Male

Female

Other

10. Are you an Indigenous person, that is, First Nations, Métis or Inuk? [AIM FOR AT LEAST 2 INDIGENOUS PARTICIPANTS ACROSS THE GROUPS]

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

11. We are interested in ensuring we reach people from different racialized and visible minority populations. Are you: [READ LIST - READ EXAMPLES IN BRACKETS ONLY IF RESPONDENT NEEDS CLARIFICATION] [AIM FOR AT LEAST 8 RACIALIZED RESPONDENTS ACROSS THE GROUPS]

- White (Caucasian)
- Arab and/or Maghrebi (e.g.: Moroccan, Algerian, Egyptian, Saudi, etc.)
- Black (e.g.: African-Canadian, Sub-Saharan African, Jamaican, Haitian, Bajan, etc.)
- Chinese Heritage (includes China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu)
- Filipino
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latin American (Hispanic, Latino, Mexico, Central America, South America)
- Central Asian (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, etc.)
- South Asian (Indian of India, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladesh, etc.)
- Southeast Asian (e.g.: Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.)
- West Asian (e.g.: Afghani, Iranian, etc.)
- Other [SPECIFY]
- Prefer not to say [DO NOT READ]

12. Including yourself, about how many people does your business employ in Canada? If you are a franchise, please only consider your location.  
[READ LIST] [ENSURE GOOD MIX FROM DIFFERENT CATEGORIES IN EACH GROUP]

- 1-4
- 5-99
- 100-499
- 500+
- Don't know [DO NOT READ] THANK AND TERMINATE

13. And which of the following reflects the approximate size of your business by gross annual revenue for your Canadian operations? Again, if you are a franchisee, please only consider your location. [READ LIST] [ENSURE GOOD MIX FROM DIFFERENT CATEGORIES IN EACH GROUP]

- Under \$30,000 per year
- \$30,000 to less than \$100,000 per year
- \$100,000 to less than \$500,000 per year
- \$500,000 to less than \$1 million per year
- \$1 million to less than \$5 million per year
- \$5 million or more per year
- Don't know [DO NOT READ] THANK AND TERMINATE

14. Have you participated in a discussion or focus group before? A focus group brings together a few people in order to hear their opinion about a given subject.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

[IF "YES" IN Q14]

15. When was the last time you attended a discussion or focus group?

- Within the last 6 months [MAX 1 PER GROUP]
- More than 6 months ago
- Don't know

[IF "YES" IN Q14]

16. How many focus groups have you attended in the last 5 years?

- 5 or less
- More than 5 THANK AND TERMINATE
- Don't know

[IF "YES" IN Q14]

17. And what was/were the main topic(s) of discussion in those groups?

IF RELATED TO FOOD SAFETY REGULATION, THANK AND TERMINATE

18. This research will require participating in a video call online. Do you have access to a computer, smartphone or tablet with high-speed internet which will allow you to participate in an online focus group?

- Yes
- No THANK AND TERMINATE
- Don't know THANK AND TERMINATE

19. Does your computer/smartphone/tablet have a camera that will allow you to be visible to the moderator and other participants as part of an online focus group?

- Yes
- No THANK AND TERMINATE
- Don't know THANK AND TERMINATE

20. Do you have a personal email address so that we can send you information about the group and links to login and join?

Yes	RECORD
No	THANK AND TERMINATE
Don't know	THANK AND TERMINATE

21. Participants in focus groups are asked to voice their opinions and thoughts. How comfortable are you in voicing your opinions in front of others? Are you...? [READ LIST]

Very comfortable	MINIMUM 3 PER GROUP
Fairly comfortable	
Not very comfortable	THANK AND TERMINATE
Not at all comfortable	THANK AND TERMINATE
Don't know	[DON'T READ] THANK AND TERMINATE

22. Sometimes participants are asked to read text, review images, or type out answers during the discussion. Given this, are you able to participate?

Yes
No
Don't know

[IF "NO" OR "DON'T KNOW" IN Q22]

23. Is there something we can do to accommodate you? One solution would be to schedule a one-on-one interview with the moderator. Is this something you would be interested in?

Yes	COLLECT INFORMATION, AND PROMISE TO FOLLOW UP WITH THEM ON SCHEDULING
No	THANK AND TERMINATE

[IF RESPONDENT SUGGESTS OTHER ACCOMODATIONS, RECORD AND PROMISE TO FOLLOW UP WITH THEM]

24. Based on your responses, it looks like you have the profile we are looking for. I would like to invite you to participate in a small group discussion, called an online focus group, we are conducting at [TIME], on [DATE]

As you may know, focus groups are used to gather information on a particular subject matter. The discussion will consist of up to 6 people and will be very informal. It will last up to 90 minutes and you will receive \$350.00 as a thank you for your time.

Would you be willing to attend?

Yes	RECORD AS A PARTICIPANT
No	THANK AND TERMINATE
Don't know	THANK AND TERMINATE

Now I have a few questions that relate to privacy, your personal information and the research process. We will need your consent on a few issues that enable us to conduct our research. As I run through these questions, please feel free to ask me any questions you would like clarified.

25. First, we will be providing a list of respondents' first names and some of your answers from these recruitment questions to the moderator so that they can sign you into the group. Do we have your permission to do this? I assure you it will be kept strictly confidential.

Yes	[GO TO 27]
No	[GO TO 26]
Don't know	[GO TO 26]

26. We need to provide the first names and background of the people attending the focus group because only the individuals invited are allowed in the session and this information is necessary for verification purposes. Please be assured that this information will be kept strictly confidential.

Now that you know this, do I have your permission to provide your first name and profile to the moderator?

Yes	
No	THANK AND TERMINATE
Don't know	THANK AND TERMINATE

27. A recording of the group session will be produced for research purposes. The recording will be used by the research professional to assist in preparing a report on the research findings and may be used by the Government of Canada for internal reporting purposes. The recording will never be made public.

Do you agree to be recorded for research and reporting purposes only?

Yes	[GO TO 29]
No	[GO TO 28]
Don't know	[GO TO 28]

28. It is necessary for the research process for us to record the session as the researchers need this material to complete the report.

With this information, do I have your permission to be recorded for research and reporting purposes only?

Yes	
No	THANK AND TERMINATE

Don't know      THANK AND TERMINATE

29. Employees from the Government of Canada may also be online to observe the groups.

Do you agree to be observed by Government of Canada employees?

Yes                    [GO TO 31]  
No                     [GO TO 30]  
Don't know         [GO TO 30]

30. It is standard focus group procedure to invite clients, in this case, Government of Canada employees, to observe the groups online. They will be there simply to hear your opinions firsthand. They may take their own notes and confer with the moderator on occasion to discuss whether there are any additional questions to ask the group.

Do you agree to be observed by Government of Canada employees?

Yes  
No                     THANK AND TERMINATE  
Don't know         THANK AND TERMINATE

31. Thank you. You qualify to participate in one of our focus groups. As I mentioned earlier, the group discussion will take place on [DATE] at [TIME] for up to 90 minutes.

Group #   Region   Language   Time

We ask that you login at least 10 minutes early to be sure you are able to connect and to test your camera, speaker, and microphone. If you require glasses for reading, please make sure you have them handy as well.

As we are only inviting a small number of people, your participation is very important to us. If for some reason you are unable to attend, please call us so that we may get someone to replace you. You can reach us at [INSERT PHONE NUMBER].

Someone will call you in the days leading up to the focus group to remind you. So that we can call you to remind you about the focus group or contact you should there be any changes, can you please confirm your name and contact information for me?

First name  
Last Name  
email                 [CONFIRM E-MAIL PROVIDED EARLIER]  
Daytime phone number  
Evening phone number

If the respondent refuses to give this information, please assure them that this information will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with the privacy law and that it will only be used to contact them to



confirm their attendance and to inform them of any changes to the discussion group. If they still refuse  
THANK & TERMINATE.

## Appendix E: General Focus Group Discussion Guide

### 1. Introductory Stage (10 min)

Welcome and greet each participant of the focus group. Introduce yourself and your role as a moderator. Then, ask each participant to introduce themselves by their first name.

- This virtual focus group discussion will be conducted on behalf of the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency).
- Our discussion will be focused on
  - (i) the view of Canadian businesses towards the Safe Food for Canadians Regulation (SFCR) and,
  - (ii) exploring how Canadian businesses feel about other food safety regulations, including federal food regulations around online sales and importing, and labelling requirements (including the labelling tools and resources available to the industry from the CFIA).
- Our discussion will be approximately 90 minutes in length. However, please feel free to excuse yourself any time during our session if you need to do so.
- As per the Government of Canada standards for conducting public opinion research, I would like to bring to your attention of --- and confirm your consent to --- the fact that this session will be both audio and video recorded for the purpose of our analysis of our discussion, in case we need to double-check the transcribed recorded audio against our notes. Moreover, representatives from the CFIA will be also attending and/or be watching a recording of our virtual session afterwards. The CFIA will use the recordings for internal purposes **only**, the recordings cannot and will not be shared outside the Agency.
- The entire discussion will remain completely **confidential and no comment and/or response shall be associated with any respondent** --- in this regard, no names will be used and/or mentioned in our final report.
- As **Moderator**, I will ask some questions, listen to your answers, and do my best to give everyone a chance to share their thoughts.
- Please always feel free to express your thoughts and opinions, given that there are no **right or wrong answers**. We will respect and value everyone's opinion, so please give your honest opinion .
- Given that **I am not employed by the CFIA, I may not be able to answer some questions concerning food safety regulations**. However, if these questions arise, we will try to get an answer for you as quickly as possible.

Introductions

- Let's go around and introduce ourselves. Please include your first name, what type of business you work at, and what you do at the business.

### 2. Awareness Towards the CFIA and CFIA Services (10 min)

- What do you currently know about the CFIA?
- How much interaction have you had with the CFIA in the past?
- How do you get information from the CFIA?

### **3. Discussion Concerning the SFCR and Other Federal Food Safety Regulations (30 min)**

- How familiar are you with the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR)?
  - Probe: How do you feel about the SFCR in relation to your business?
  - Probe: Why do you feel this way about it?
  - Probe: Are you aware of any other federal food safety regulations? If so, could you name them?
- Would you describe yourself as having a good grasp of the federal food safety regulations that apply to your business?
  - Probe: What is behind the confidence/lack of confidence?
- Do you find them easy to understand?
- Has anyone been to the CFIA website? What was your reason for visiting?
  - Probe: general thoughts? Did you find your answer/information you wanted?
- Have you used the toolkit for business? Did you find it helpful?
  - Probe: Any specific part that was helpful? Any other pages helpful?
- What are the biggest challenges that your business is facing in relation to complying to food safety regulations in general?
  - Probe: Could you suggest any hypothetical causes to these challenges in question?
  - In an ideal world, what role do you think regulators should play in the food safety system?
- Have you heard the term “outcome-based regulations”?
  - What does this mean to you? Can you describe or provide an example?
  - What do you think of outcome-based regulations?
    - Probe: Generally positive or negative thoughts on outcome-based?
    - Probe: Confidence in properly incorporating regulations
- What do you think of when I say the term “Food safety culture”?

- Probe: Initial reactions and thoughts?
  - Is this something your business has? How do you know?
  - Could you give an example of food safety culture?
  - Probe: Are there tangible things you do to create a food safety culture?
  - Probe: Is this industry-wide? Canada-wide? Or specific to a company?
- As a growing business, what would you say are the things that impact you now in relation to food safety regulations?
    - Do you believe that Canadian businesses have access to the right information about their own roles and responsibilities within the food safety system?
    - In the past, have you, yourself, had any difficulty in accessing this information?
    - In general were you satisfied with how this information was communicated to you?

#### **4. Creative from current campaign (30 minutes)**

- We are going to show you some creative concepts, we want to get your general feedback on how effective these concepts are

#### **Show concepts A&B, then C&D**

##### **For all advertisements:**

- What are your initial thoughts on these advertisements?
- Would you click on it? Would it resonate with you? Why or why not?
- What do you hope to see when you click?
- What would be more likely to grab your attention? Something more informal or more authoritative? Photo of real business owner versus graphic?
- Does it look like a scam? Authentic?

##### **For concept A & B:**

- This advertisement leads to this webpage: <https://inspection.canada.ca/food-safety-for-industry/food-safety-rules-for-small-business/eng/1643050798737/1643050800221>  
Is this what you would hope to see when you click?
  - Probe: Does it resonate with you and your understanding of the regulations?

##### **For concept C & D:**

- Does anyone here sell products from another country? Do you see yourself as an importer?
  - Probe: Would this advertisement resonate?

- This advertisement leads to the same webpage (show as needed). Is this what you would hope to see when you click?
  - Probe: Does it resonate with you and your understanding of the regulations?
  - Probe: Who would find this webpage useful?
  - Probe: What do you think they are trying to get at it with this webpage?
- Is one type of advertisement better suited to that landing page?

## **5. Conclusion (10 min)**

Consult with CFIA representatives for any further questions.

- Roundtable: Do you have any further suggestion on how to improve communications concerning (i) information about the CFIA and CFIA services, (ii) federal food safety regulations and (iii) a businesses' roles and responsibilities within the food safety system.

Concluding remarks and thanks.

Concept A:



Concept B:



Concept C:



Concept D:



## Appendix F: Ask CFIA Focus Group Discussion Guide

### 1. Introductions (10 min)

Welcome and greet each participant of the focus group. Introduce yourself and your role as a moderator. Then, ask each participant to introduce themselves by their first name.

- This virtual focus group discussion will be conducted on behalf of the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency).
- Our discussion will be focused on the view of Canadian businesses on the way the CFIA handles various enquiries.
- Our discussion will be approximately 90 minutes in length. However, please feel free to excuse yourself any time during our session if you need to do so.
- As per the Government of Canada standards for conducting public opinion research, I would like to bring to your attention of --- and confirm your consent to --- the fact that this session will be both audio and video recorded for the purpose of our analysis of our discussion, in case we need to double-check the transcribed recorded audio against our notes. Moreover, representatives from the CFIA may be attending and/or be watching a recording of our virtual session afterwards. The CFIA will use the recordings for internal purposes **only**, the recordings cannot and will not be shared outside the Agency.
- The entire discussion will remain completely **confidential and no comment and/or response shall be associated with any respondent** --- in this regard, no names will be used and/or mentioned in our final report.
- As **Moderator**, I will ask some questions, listen to your answers, and do my best to give everyone a chance to share their thoughts.
- Please always feel free to express your thoughts and opinions, given that there are no **right or wrong answers**. We will respect and value everyone's opinion, so please give your honest opinion .
- Given that **I am not employed by the CFIA, I may not be able to answer some questions concerning food safety regulations**. However, if these questions arise, we will try to get an answer for you as quickly as possible.

#### Introductions

- Let's go around and introduce ourselves. Please include your first name, what type of business you work at, and what you do at the business.

### 2. General enquiry experience with the CFIA (30 minutes)

- On the whole, how often does your company have questions about the food safety regulations?
  - Probe: Reasons for asking the questions – specific areas not clear?

- What do you know about the process of submitting questions to the CFIA? How do you do it?
  - Probe: Do you know where your questions go? Which unit?
  - What are some challenges to submitting your questions to the appropriate group in the CFIA?
- How would you say the CFIA is at responding to questions in general?
- There are multiple channels available for questions, including Local/Regional Offices, Public Enquiries, My CFIA, Ask CFIA, National Centre for Permissions, National Import Service Centre. Can we talk about the ones you're familiar with?
  - Probe: Would you be able to tell me why someone would use one channel over another? (For example, the kind of questions or concerns for each channel)
- We are going to talk about specific questions today about food safety regulation guidance. How do you to get guidance on CFIA food safety regulations?
- I would like to talk about your process before asking a question through any of the specific channels. Do you look for the answer yourself before asking the CFIA?
  - Probe: How long would you say you spend looking for information on food safety regulation? Where do you look?
- Who spends time on the CFIA website? What do you think of it?
  - Probe: Any specific areas come to mind as helpful or unhelpful?
- Do you have other contacts at the Agency, maybe emails or phone numbers?
  - Probe: What is your preferred way of contacting the Agency?

### **3. Experience with Ask CFIA (30 minutes)**

- We've already mentioned Ask CFIA, and you have been recruited here as you have been asked a question that has gone to the Ask CFIA unit. How many times have you used Ask CFIA?
- Did you know your question was responded to by the Ask CFIA unit?
  - Probe: Did you originally submit your question to a different channel?
- **Ask CFIA** is a service to provide the food industry with one point of entry through the online 'contact us' form to ask questions to help you understand and comply with current food regulatory



requirements. Ask CFIA provides written guidance on food regulatory questions submitted by Canadian businesses and non-resident importers (NRI) eligible to hold a Safe Food for Canadians (SFC) licence.

What did you think of the answers you've received from Ask CFIA?

- What does your ideal enquiry response look like from Ask CFIA?
  - Probe: Do the responses from Ask CFIA help you understand and comply with current food regulatory requirements?
  - Probe: What are some alternative ways that you have tried to get a response to food regulatory questions? Did you try to contact the Agency a different way? If you contacted the Agency a different way, what other channel/s did you use?
- Why did you use Ask CFIA and not another channel --- such as My CFIA or National Centre for Permissions --- to contact the CFIA?
  - Probe: As far as you know, did any of your questions get directed to another department by Ask CFIA?
- Has anyone used Ask CFIA going back a few years?
  - Probe: Would you say that the service has changed over time?
  - Probe: What has changed?
  - Probe: Have Ask CFIA answers become clearer over time?
  - Probe: How did these changes impact your experience with Ask CFIA?
- If Ask CFIA were to be discontinued how would you be affected?

#### **4. Conclusion (20 minutes)**

Consult with CFIA representatives for any further questions.

- Do you have any experience asking questions with other department? Do you have a similar enquiry experience when asking them a question?
  - Probe: Online written services vs telephone vs in-person vs website
- Do you have other ideas/suggestions for an improved service for Ask CFIA?
- Is there anything else you would like to add concerning our discussion today?

Concluding remarks and thanks.

## Appendix G: Ask CFIA IDI Discussion Guide

### 1. Introductory Stage

Welcome and greet participant of the IDI. Introduce yourself and your role as interviewer. Then, ask participant to introduce themselves by their first name and describe their job.

- This in-depth interview will be conducted on behalf of the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency).
- Our discussion will be focused on the view of Canadian businesses on the way the CFIA handles various enquiries.
- Our discussion will be approximately 45 minutes in length.
- As per the Government of Canada standards for conducting public opinion research, I would like to bring to your attention of --- and confirm your consent to --- the fact that this session will be both audio and video recorded for the purpose of our analysis of our discussion, in case we need to double-check the transcribed recorded audio against our notes. Moreover, representatives from the CFIA may be attending and/or be watching a recording of our virtual session afterwards. The CFIA will use the recordings for internal purposes **only**, the recordings cannot and will not be shared outside the Agency.
- The entire discussion will remain completely **confidential and no comment and/or response shall be associated with any respondent** --- in this regard, no names will be used and/or mentioned in our final report.
- As **interviewer**, I will ask some questions, listen to your answers, and do my best to give everyone a chance to share their thoughts.
- Please always feel free to express your thoughts and opinions, given that there are no **right or wrong answers**. We will respect and value everyone's opinion, so please give your honest opinion.
- Given that **I am not employed by the CFIA, I may not be able to answer some questions concerning food safety regulations**. However, if these questions arise, we will try to get an answer for you as quickly as possible.

### 2. General enquiry experience with the CFIA

- On the whole, how often do you work with companies who have questions about the food safety regulations?
  - Probe: Reasons for asking the questions – specific areas not clear?
  - Probe: Why do they use you to ask questions instead of asking themselves?
- What do you know about the process of submitting questions to the CFIA? How do you do it?
  - Probe: Do you know where your questions go? Which unit?

- Probe: What are some challenges to submitting your questions to the appropriate group in the CFIA?
- How would you say the CFIA is at responding to questions in general?
- There are multiple channels available for questions, including Local/Regional Offices, Public Enquiries, My CFIA, Ask CFIA, National Centre for Permissions, National Import Service Centre. Can we talk about the ones you're familiar with?
- Do you spend time on the CFIA website, what do you think? Any specific areas come to mind as helpful or unhelpful?
- Do you have other contacts at the Agency, maybe emails or phone numbers?
  - Probe: What is your preferred way of contacting the Agency?

### **3. Experience with Ask CFIA**

- We've already mentioned Ask CFIA, and you have been recruited here as you have been asked a question that has gone to the Ask CFIA unit. How many times have you used Ask CFIA?
- What did you think of the answers you've received from Ask CFIA?
- What does your ideal enquiry response look like from Ask CFIA?
  - Probe: Do the responses from Ask CFIA help your clients understand and comply with current food regulatory requirements?
  - Probe: What are some alternative ways that you have tried to get a response to food regulatory questions? Did you try to contact the Agency a different way? If you contacted the Agency a different way, what other channel/s did you use?
- Have you used Ask CFIA going back a few years?
  - Probe: Would you say that the service has changed over time?
  - Probe: What has changed?
  - Probe: Have Ask CFIA answers become clearer over time?
  - Probe: How did these changes impact your experience with Ask CFIA?
- Do you have any experience asking questions with other department? Do you have a similar enquiry experience when asking them a question?
  - Probe: Online written services vs telephone vs in-person vs website

#### **4. Conclusion**

- Do you have other ideas/suggestions for an improved service for Ask CFIA?
- Is there anything else you would like to add concerning our discussion today?

Concluding remarks and thanks.

## Appendix H: Ask CFIA Survey Questionnaire

### Introduction

Thank you for participating in this important survey.

As mentioned in the email invitation, Pollara Strategic Insights – one of Canada’s leading research firms – is conducting this survey on behalf of the Government of Canada.

Your participation is voluntary, confidential and anonymous. The information you provide will be administered according to the requirements of the Privacy Act and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act. No one working for the Government of Canada will ever see your individual survey responses, they will only see data that is anonymous, and averaged together from among all the survey respondents.

The survey will take about 5 minutes to complete. To proceed with the survey in English, click here.

Should you have any questions about the survey, you can contact a Pollara representative at [information@pollara.com](mailto:information@pollara.com), or a representative of the Government of Canada at [cfia.information.acia@inspection.gc.ca](mailto:cfia.information.acia@inspection.gc.ca).

[INCLUDE FRENCH TRANSLATION BELOW ON ENGLISH LANDING PAGE. FLIP ORDER ON FRENCH LANDING PAGE.]

### Ask CFIA

**F1. Ask CFIA** is a service to provide the food industry with one point of entry through the online ‘contact us’ form to ask questions to help you understand and comply with current food regulatory requirements. Ask CFIA provides written guidance on food regulatory questions submitted by Canadian businesses and non-resident importers (NRI) eligible to hold a Safe Food for Canadians (SFC) licence.

Based on this definition, do you think that any of your contact with the CFIA has ever involved using the Ask CFIA service?

Yes	1
No	2
Don’t know	98

[THANK AND TERMINATE IF F1 = 2 OR 98]

**F2.** In the last year approximately how many times have you used the Ask CFIA service?

Did not use in past year	1
1 time	2
2 times	3
3 times	4
4 times	5
5 or more	6
Don't know	98

**F3.** What topic did your question(s) to the Ask CFIA service relate to? Select all that apply. [randomize, with 77, 88, and 99 anchored]

Labelling and composition	1
Importing	2
Exporting	3
Traceability	4
Preventive controls	5
Starting a food business	6
Applying for a licence	7
Other, please specify: _____	77
Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99

**F4.** Why did you decide to use the Ask CFIA service? Select all that apply.

Couldn't find information needed after searching on the CFIA website	1
Heard about Ask CFIA from someone else	2
Information found elsewhere wasn't clear	3
Question was complicated / complex	4
Didn't realize I was using Ask CFIA (just completed the contact CFIA form)	5
Other, please specify: _____	77
Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99

**F5.** Rate your overall level of satisfaction with the Ask CFIA service. Please use a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all satisfied and 7 means very satisfied.

1 – Not at all satisfied	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7– Very satisfied	7

Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99

[SKIP IF F5 = 98 OR 99]

**F6.** Why did you provide that rating? Please be specific about positives and negatives associated with your experience. [ASK OPEN]

**F7.** Rate your level of satisfaction with the following. Please use the same scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all satisfied and 7 means very satisfied:

- I. The ease of using Ask CFIA
- II. The level of clarity in the Ask CFIA response to your enquiry
- III. The amount of time it took to respond to your enquiry
- IV. The level of detail in the Ask CFIA response to your enquiry
- V. Ask CFIA's support of your business to increase your awareness and understanding of food regulatory requirements
- VI. Ask CFIA's support of your business to achieve compliance with food regulatory requirements

1 – Not at all satisfied	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7– Very satisfied	7
Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99

**F8.** What element is most important to you or your organization when using “Ask CFIA”?

Ease of use	1
Clarity of response	2
Speed of response	3
Level of detail in response	4
Other, please specify:	77
Don't know	98

**F9.** Thinking about the overall value to you or your organization of getting the answer in writing from Ask CFIA, how valuable to you was the answer? Use a scale of 1-7 where 1 is not at all valuable and 7 is very valuable.

1 – Not at all valuable	1
-------------------------	---

2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7 – Very valuable	7
Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99

**F10.** How likely would you be to use “Ask CFIA” in the future. Please use a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all likely and 7 is very likely?

1 – Not at all likely	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7 – Very likely	7
Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99

**F11.** Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience using the Ask CFIA service?  
[ASK OPEN]

## Demographics

Thank you for your answers. We just have a few final demographic questions to classify your responses.

**D1.** In what province or territory do you live?

British Columbia	1
Alberta	2
Saskatchewan	3
Manitoba	4
Ontario	5
Quebec	6
New Brunswick	7
Nova Scotia	8
Prince Edward Island	9
Newfoundland and Labrador	10
Yukon	11
Northwest Territories	12
Nunavut	13
	80



Other (please specify):	77
Prefer not to say	99

**D2.** In what year were you born? [INCLUDE DROP DOWN LIST OF YEARS, WITH “PREFER NOT TO SAY” OPTION]

**D3.** With what gender do you identify?

Male	1
Female	2
Other	3
Prefer not to say	99

**D4.** Which of the following categories best describes your business?

Small business	1
Commercial industry	2
Industry association	3
Industry consultant	4
Other (please specify):	77
Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99

**D5.** Which of the following categories best describes your business' focus?

Agriculture	1
Processor or manufacturer	2
Wholesale or distributor	3
Retail	4
Other (please specify): _____	77
Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99

**D6.** Approximately how many people, including yourself, does your company employ in Canada? If you are a franchise, please only consider your location.

1 to 4	1
5 to 99	2
100 to 499	3
500 or more	4
Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99

**D7.** Approximately what was your businesses' gross annual revenue for your Canadian operations last year? Again, if you are a franchise, please only consider your location.

\$30,000 or less	1
\$30,000 to less than \$100,000	2
\$100,000 to less than \$500,000	3
\$500,000 to less than \$1 million	4
\$1 million to less than \$5 million	5
\$5 million or more	6
Don't know	98
Prefer not to say	99